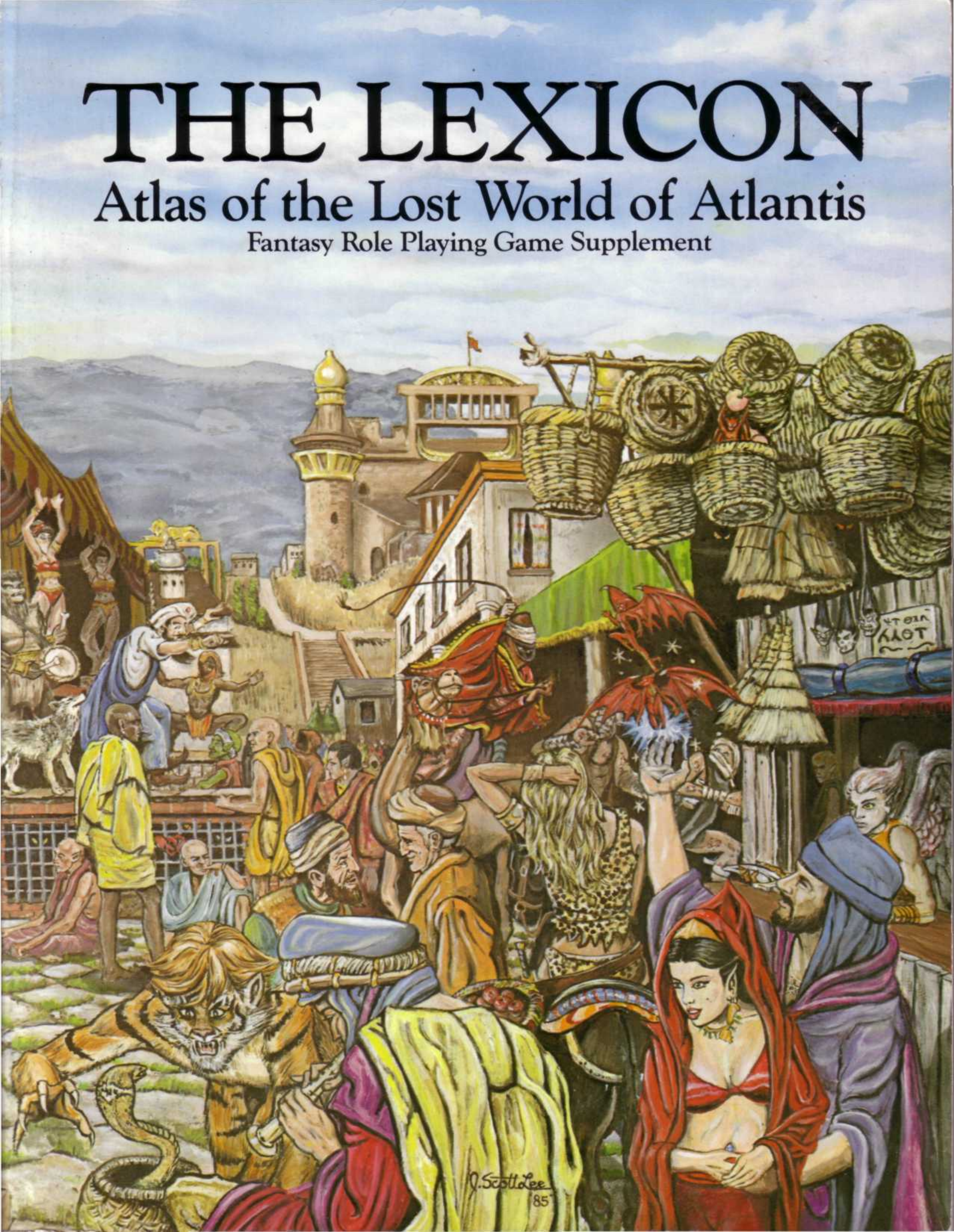
THE LEXICON

Atlas of the Lost World of Atlantis

Fantasy Role Playing Game Supplement


J. Scott Lee
'85

THE LEXICON

Atlas of the Lost World of Atlantis

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INTRODUCTION

THE LEXICON is the cyclopedia and atlas of the Atlantean world, and the second book of Bard Games' **ATLANTEAN TRILOGY** (the companion volumes being **THE ARCANUM and THE BESTIARY**). Together, the three books provide a highly detailed setting for fantasy role-playing; separately, any of the three books may be used to add variety and color to an ongoing campaign.

ABOUT THE LEXICON

The following section should be reviewed by players and Game Judges prior to the use of this book in any F.R.P. campaign:

- A brief history of the world can be found in Chapter One. It should be stressed that all dates are approximate, and are based upon the Atlantean calendar (i.e., other cultures may employ different dating systems). In game terms, a Second Age campaign may begin anytime between the years 150-200 (by Atlantean Second Age reckoning); in modern day terms, this would equate to approximately 15,000 B.C.

For game purposes, all maps found in **THE LEXICON** should be considered inaccurate to some degree, especially those which depict uncivilized lands (such as Lemuria, Mu, Anostos, etc.). This reflects the rather unsophisticated map-making techniques available to cartographers of this ancient period, and the lack of specific knowledge concerning many isolated regions. Game Judges will note that certain remote areas of the world have deliberately been described in vague or speculative terms. The reasons for this are simple: ocean travel was still considered dangerous by many people of the Second Age, and knowledge of isolated or distant lands was at best inexact. To further expand this idea, Game Judges should feel free to add topographical features which are not shown on any map (such as uncharted islands, hidden lagoons, ruins, etc.), and to interpret inexplicit sections of text as they desire.

The world of Atlantis is an immense setting for an F.R.P. campaign, affording players with nearly unlimited possibilities for adventure. By the same token, the possibilities for danger are numerous. With the exception of a few large cities and settlements, most regions are essentially vast and underdeveloped wilderness. Supplies and equipment will be difficult, or in some cases impossible, to obtain. Wild beasts or primitive tribesmen (many with their own strange beliefs and customs) will constitute the only forms of life in certain areas. Even in supposedly civilized locales, adventurers may find themselves the objects of superstitious fear and hatred. The Game Judge should always emphasize these considerations when creating Atlantean world scenarios.

Atlantean world, plus maps and charts depicting ocean currents, resources, trade routes, and encounters.

Although there is a tremendous amount of material in **THE LEXICON,** the assimilation of this much information should pose few problems. A quick look at the map will show why this is true: the world of Atlantis is actually Earth, as it appeared in the bygone Second Age (Eria corresponds to modern day North America, Gondwana to Africa, Jambu to Asia, and so on). The familiarity which most players and Game Judges already have with these places should provide the basis for a well-defined campaign and enhance the overall quality of play.

ABOUT THE ATLANTEAN WORLD

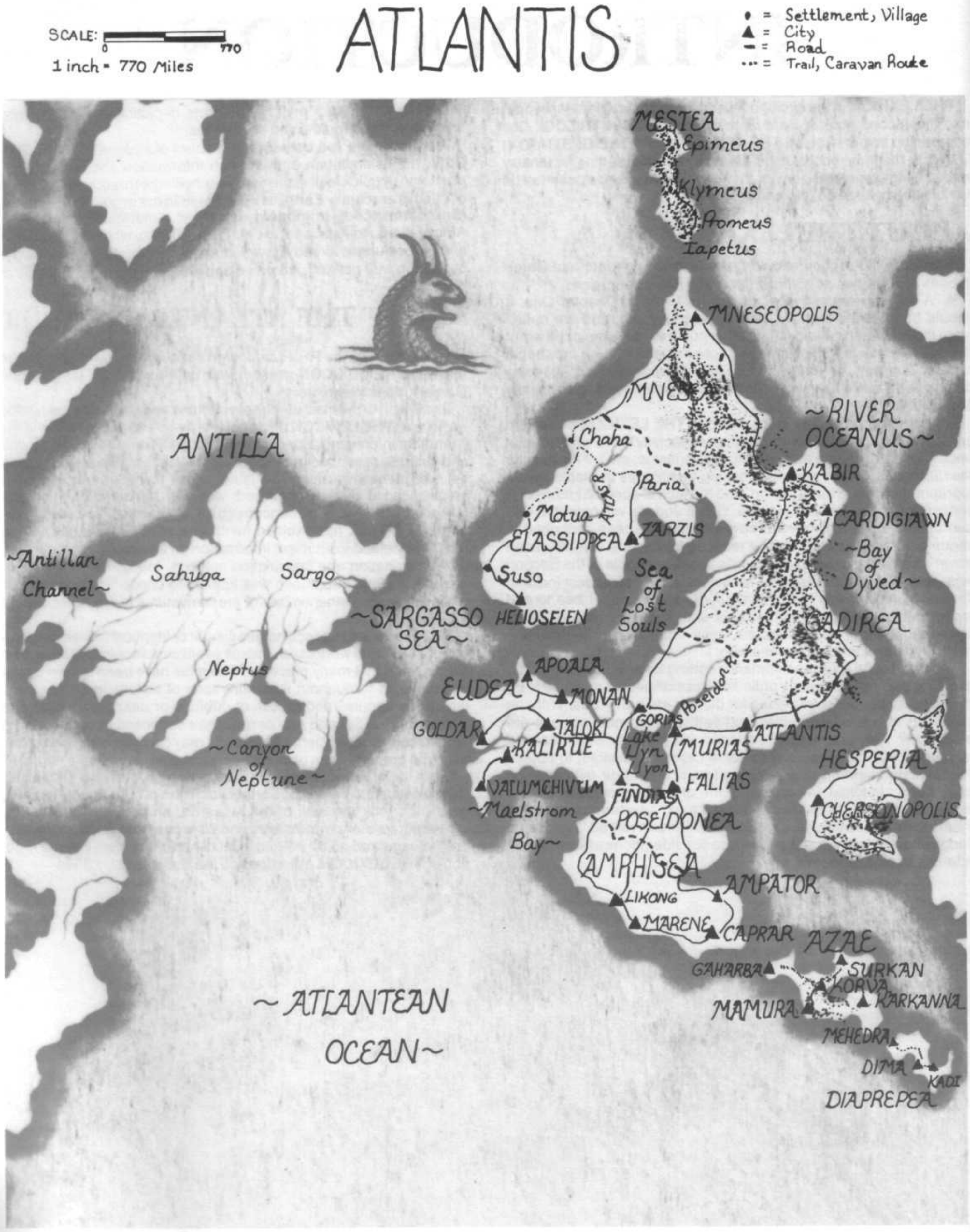
Unlike most of the F.R.P. campaign supplements available on the market, **THE LEXICON** presents an entire world for players and Game Judges to explore.

In addition to the many different countries and territories delineated in the text, **THE LEXICON** also contains five of the largest cities in the

Another interesting aspect of **THE LEXICON** is that all of the places and cultures described in the book either existed or were at one time believed to have existed. This is not to say that a certain degree of artistic licence was not employed; where multiple and/or contradictory accounts were found concerning a single locale, the material was often edited and reorganized for the sake of consistency. When research yielded insufficient information on a particular place or culture, imagination and speculation sufficed, to augment the text as needed. A similar approach was applied to choosing place names; while many are authentic, some are derivations of old or legendary appellations.

In a few instances, place names similar or identical to their modern-day counterparts were used. If some seem anachronistic, it should be kept in mind that many places and peoples have been known by the same names throughout the entire span of history. In other cases, legendary peoples and places of dubious or unknown origin were included in the Second Age despite their supposed association with more recent eras. Ancient history buffs may consider such inclusions to be the predecessors of later peoples/places of the same name.

From the standpoints of both design and production, **THE LEXICON** was quite an ambitious endeavor. Thanks here to Ed Mortimer, who undertook the bulk of the research, and to J. Andrew Keith, whose perseverance and professionalism proved invaluable to a certain beleaguered editor. All told, a lot of hard work went into the creation of **THE LEXICON.** We hope you like the results.


ATLANTIS
SCALE: 0 770
1 inch = 770 Miles
● = Settlement, Village
▲ = City
▬ = Road
••• = Trail, Caravan Route
MESTEA
Epimeus
Klymeus
Prometheus
Iapetus
MNESEOPOLIS
MNESEA
~RIVER OCEANUS~
KABIR
CARDIGIAWN
~Bay of Dyved~
Chaha
Paria
ATLAS R.
Motua
ZARZIS
ELASSIPPEA
Suso
HELIOSELEN
Sea of Lost Souls
GADIREA
ANTILLA
~Antillan Channel~
Sahuga
Sargo
~SARGASSO SEA~
Neptus
~Canyon of Neptune~
APOALA
EUDEA
MONAN
GOLDAR
TALOKI
KALIRUE
GORIAS
Poseidon R.
Lake Llyn Llyon
MURIAS
ATLANTIS
HESPERIA
FALIAS
FINDIAS
VALUMCHIVUM
~Maelstrom Bay~
POSEIDONEA
CHERSONOPOLIS
AMPHISEA
AMPATOR
LIKONG
MARENE
CAPRAR
AZAE
GAHARBA
SURKAN
KORVA
KARKANNA
MAMURA
MEHEDRA
DIMA
KADI
DIAPREPEA
~ATLANTEAN OCEAN~

ATLANTIS

The continent of Atlantis is a large land mass, surrounded by the River Oceanus to the east and northeast, the Atlantean Ocean to the south, and the River Poseidonus and Sargasso Sea to the west and northwest respectively. It stretches from the cold island of Mestea in the north, lying at a higher latitude than the northern tip of Alba, down to the southern mainland of Amphisea and the islands of Azae and Diaprepea in the tropical band south of Hesperia. Differences in climate and weather are quite marked from one end of the great island continent to the other.

Physically, Atlantis includes many diverse types of terrain, but mountains, plains, and woodland predominate. The continent is divided roughly in half by a spine of mountains, the southernmost — and largest — being the lofty peak of Mount Atlas. At the foothills of this high mountain is the city of Atlantis, the largest city of the continent and the traditional capitol of the Atlantean Empire.

Stretching out to the west and south of the city and the mountain range is the Plain of Gwyddneu (GWID-nee-yu), a fertile, rolling tableland which in the First Age was known as the "Breadbasket" of Atlantis. The entire plain is outlined with great copper-plated, cut-stone irrigation canals, which feed water from two major rivers into the fields. Although all of the canals still function today, neglect and disuse have reduced the area of arable land to about 60% of the First Age farming area.

There are three major forestlands in Atlantis, one in the northwest, one in the southwest, and one in the far south. Each is quite distinct, from the southern jungles of Amphisea to the pinewoods of Elassippea and the deciduous forests of Eudea. Plant and animal life is diverse and abundant in each of these regions.

HISTORY OF ATLANTIS: THE FIRST AGE

Atlantean history may be divided into two distinct periods: the bygone First Age and the current era known as the Second Age. According to legend, the first Atlanteans were little more than savages when the god Poseidon came to their island continent, took a wife, and by her had ten sons. Poseidon gave each of his sons a kingdom on the continent and instructed them to have many sons and daughters, that they might begin a new race of men. To settle disputes, Poseidon made his eldest son, Atlas, overlord above all the others.

Following the decree of their creator, the ten sons of Poseidon were fruitful, and the new race soon prospered. Unlike their savage ancestors, the new men were tall (legends say seven feet), and had strong features, copper-brown skin, and black hair. They built great cities of stone, and developed an advanced culture based on the sciences of alchemy and sorcery. After some time the ten kingdoms united, and formed the nation of Atlantis (named after their first ruler, Atlas). They built great ships, and brought their prosperity and knowledge to the savage peoples of other lands. For thousands of years they ruled wisely, and their civilization reached great heights of achievement.

The descendants of the first kings, however, proved lacking in the wisdom of their ancestors. They fought amongst each other, and used their might to enslave the weaker peoples of other lands. The Atlantean sorcerers, blinded by their lust for power, tampered with the creations of the old gods. With their magics they created such abominations as the chimera, manticore, and griffon; to fight their wars they created armies of foul Nethermen (goblin/human crossbreeds) and bestial Andamen (animal/human crossbreeds). They uttered blasphemies against the old gods, and forced their subjects to bow before stone idols. For many years, the Atlanteans ruled in this fashion, until the time of "The Cataclysm," a disaster unparalleled in the annals of mankind. The cause of the Cataclysm remains to this day an uncertainty; some claim that Poseidon, angered at the insolence of his mortal charges, caused the seas to rise up and inundate the land. Others say that the Atlanteans caused their own destruction through the misuse of their powerful sciences. Whatever its origin, the Cataclysm brought a swift and terrible end to the First Age empire of Atlantis and obliterated most traces of its former grandeur. Though a portion of the Atlantean continent survived relatively intact, the capitol city of Atlantis had sunk beneath the waves, and the empire was no more.

THE DARK AGE AND HESPERIA'S GOLDEN AGE

Following the collapse of the Atlantean First Age, much of the world was thrown into a state of chaos. The survivors of the Cataclysm, freed from the yoke of the Atlanteans, soon fell to warring amongst themselves. The knowledge and culture of First Age Atlantis were spurned and soon forgotten as men reverted to their earlier, barbaric ways. For untold millenia, conditions remained unchanged. In time, however, certain of the larger tribes began to settle again along the coastal regions. With the establishment of villages, towns and cities, new nations came into being: the copper-skinned Erians and Amazons (both said to be descended from Atlanteans who escaped the Cataclysm), the Khitans of eastern Jambu, the black-skinned Ophir and Qaddani of Gondwana, and the Tharshi of Mediterranea. Of these, the Amazons of Hesperia (a warlike, female-dominant society) soon rose to a position of superiority. Within a few years the Hesperians had conquered and colonized much of the northwestern coast of Gondwana. Only Qaddan and the Ophir, secure within their great stone fortresses, had successfully resisted the Amazon invaders. Temporarily brought to a standstill in Gondwana, the Hesperians turned their attentions towards Atlantis.

The once-mighty Atlanteans, struggling to rebuild their shattered civilization, proved no match for their fierce antagonists. Attacking from the south, the Amazon forces advanced swiftly towards the new capitol of Atlantis, repulsing the weaker Atlantean army at every turn. The fall of Atlantis seemed inevitable. It was, however, not to be. Despite its many successful conquests, the Hesperian empire was weakening from within. Internal squabbles with the Gorgons (a snake-worshipping cult of Amazons) and an inability to maintain order amongst the peoples the Amazons had subjugated were draining Hesperia's limited resources. The Atlantean campaign, close as it was to its goal, had served to further overextend the forces of the Amazons. Aware of Hesperia's difficulties, Ophir and Qaddan chose this time to launch counterstrikes against the Amazons in Gondwana.

The results, for Hesperia, were disastrous. Though only partially successful, the Gondwanan's attack served to further agitate Hesperia's internal difficulties. The Gorgons rebelled, and Hesperia became embroiled in a civil war. The garrisons stationed in Atlantis and Gondwana had to be recalled to quell the revolution. Although the Gorgons were subsequently defeated, Hesperia suffered the loss of most of its conquered lands. The golden age of Hesperia had come to an end.

THE SECOND AGE

With the fall of the Hesperian empire the modern era known as the Second Age had begun. The first hundred and fifty years of this epoch saw the re-emergence of Atlantis as a world power, allied with Ophir and on relatively good terms with neighboring Hesperia. Tartessos, Qaddan, Sheba, and Khitai established themselves as forces to be reckoned with, Tartessos in particular being a source of some concern to Atlanteans. Though conflicts rage in many of the smaller countries, the major powers continue to cling to a tenuous and often fragile state of peaceful coexistence.

LEGACY OF THE FIRST AGE

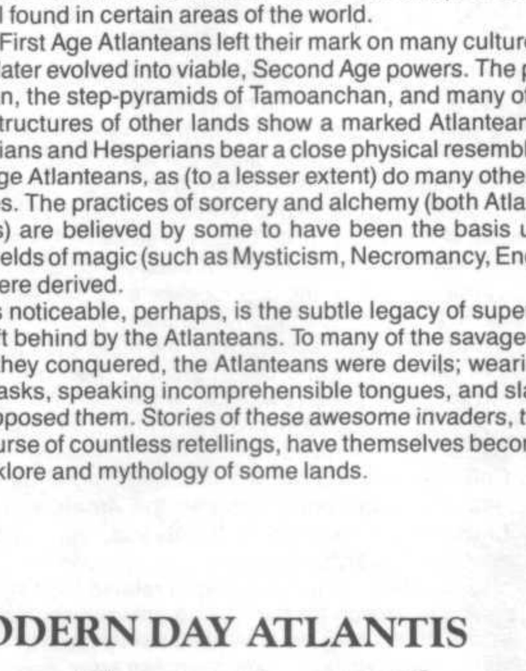
Ruins left by the Atlantean colonists of the First Age are said to exist in wilderness regions throughout the world. Some have been found to hold wondrous treasures and artifacts of mysterious design; others have yielded nothing, their contents long ago ransacked by thieves and adventurers. Certainly many others remain as yet undiscovered.

Of the abominations created by the Atlantean sorcerers, only a few such creatures are believed still to be in existence. The same cannot be said of the Andaman and Nethermen races, many of whom survived The Great Cataclysm. Though less numerous than some of the other non-human races, tribes of Nethermen and prides of Andaman are still found in certain areas of the world.

The First Age Atlanteans left their mark on many cultures, some of which later evolved into viable, Second Age powers. The pyramids of Qaddan, the step-pyramids of Tamoanchan, and many of the monolithic structures of other lands show a marked Atlantean influence. The Erians and Hesperians bear a close physical resemblance to the First Age Atlanteans, as (to a lesser extent) do many other tribes and peoples. The practices of sorcery and alchemy (both Atlantean innovations) are believed by some to have been the basis upon which other fields of magic (such as Mysticism, Necromancy, Enchantment, etc.) were derived.

Less noticeable, perhaps, is the subtle legacy of superstition and fear left behind by the Atlanteans. To many of the savage folk whose lands they conquered, the Atlanteans were devils; wearing hideous iron masks, speaking incomprehensible tongues, and slaying those who opposed them. Stories of these awesome invaders, twisted over the course of countless retellings, have themselves become a part of the folklore and mythology of some lands.

MODERN DAY ATLANTIS



The Atlantis of modern times is an influential, if not dominant, force in world affairs. Its navy rivals or surpasses that of any other nation, totaling well over 2,000 warships. The Atlantean army, comprised mainly of heavy infantry (pike, short sword, scale mail, and shield), heavy cavalry (lance, mace, plate mail, shield, and heavy warhorse) and Hesperian archers (mercenaries equipped with long bow, short sword, and bronze partial plate and helm) is similarly well-regarded. The number and exact make-up of these units is kept secret for security reasons.

While the Atlanteans have regained a portion of their former eminence in the fields of sorcery and alchemy, much of the magical knowledge possessed by their First Age ancestors was lost following The Great Cataclysm. Many operations once believed to have been performed on a large-scale basis (such as the making of the magical metal, orichalc) can now only be accomplished on a limited scale.

Even so, Atlantean alchemical practices are generally regarded as being superior to those of other lands.

In the Arts and "Lesser Sciences" (as Atlanteans call all non-magical fields of study) Atlantis is also unsurpassed. Atlantean craftsmen and artisans are renowned for the fine workmanship of their wares; outside the country Atlantean-made goods sell for 10-40% more than merchandise of purportedly comparable value.

Atlantean architects, engineers, navigators, and metal workers are considered among the finest in the civilized world, and are in great demand. In terms of its government, Atlantis is currently the most enlightened of the world's nations. There are no class or caste distinctions (all Atlanteans are considered equal in the eyes of the law), and no Atlantean may own or sell slaves. Taxation is low (2% of earnings), and Atlantean laws are generally quite fair. Individuals accused of any crime are allowed a trial by jury, and up to three separate appeals. The only offenses punishable by death are treason and murder, all other crimes being punishable by imprisonment and/or sentences of hard labor.

As it was in the First Age, Atlantis is still divided into ten kingdoms: Poseidonea (home of the capitol city of Atlantis), Gadirea, Eudea, Mnesa, Amphisea, Elassippea, Azae, Diprepea, Mestea, and Autochthea. Though Autochthea was totally destroyed in the Cataclysm, it is still officially named on the rolls of the ten kingdoms. Called "The Lost Kingdom," it is believed to be the homeland of the Atlanteans who later settled in Avalon (see: *ALBA*). In its place, the Hesperian territory of Celaena was added to the list of Atlantean kingdoms, giving the Queen of Hesperia a seat on the Atlantean Council of Ten Kingdoms (the ruling body of Atlantis, presided over by the King of Poseidonea).

Politically, Atlantis has strong ties with Ophir and, to a lesser extent, Hesperia. Its trade partners include Ys, Broceliande, Alba, Iber, and Qaddan (there is some trade with Equa, and even less with Khitai). Its primary rival is Tartessos, a nation which wields much influence in the Mediterranean region. Although there is no love lost between these two lands, Atlantis is only on bad terms with Gorgos, the corsairs of Cymbri, and the vile Fomorians of Anostos.

The patron deity of Atlantis is still the sea god, Poseidon, though the state has no "official" religion. As a result, many different cults and religious groups are found throughout the ten kingdoms. As long as they abide by Atlantean law, the followers of these alternate religions are generally left alone by the government.

AMPHISEA (am-fih-SEE-a)

The southernmost kingdom on the continent of Atlantis proper is Amphisea, a land of rugged jungle. It lies south of Poseidonea, surrounded by the Bay of Maelstroms, the Atlantean Ocean, and the River Oceanus. The kingdom has a tropical climate; the equator passes directly through the realm.

The people of Amphisea are darkest of the various Atlantean races, their skin more brown than bronze; they also tend to be tall and thin. This southern region is hot and humid, and minimal clothing is the rule for all. Only the lightest cotton linens are worn.

This population is concentrated on the east coast, where the jungle is sparsest.

Westward the jungle becomes so thick as to be almost impenetrable in places, except along the remnants of ancient First Age roads. These are rarely used today, and are in a terrible state of disrepair; only brigands and other outcasts commonly travel into the interior. Along the west coast, corsairs sometimes lair in rocky, uncharted inlets, but the presence of the Bay of Maelstroms makes the waters dangerous even to these desperate men.

On the east coast the roads have been better maintained, and are occasionally traveled by peddlers and merchants from the northern regions. These routes link together the port cities of Caprar (KAP-rar), Likong (LIE-kong), Marena (ma-RAY-na), and the capitol, Ampator (AM-pa-tor). The king of Amphisea resides at Ampator, the only port of any importance in the region.

Amphisea's primary resources are wild animals, hides, and furs. Shiploads of caged creatures (including lions, panthers, wild boar, and black apes) depart daily from Ampator, headed for the amphitheatres of the capitol city of Atlantis and other, more distant locales. Trained animals, valued as pets and guard beasts, are also exported from here. The nature of Amphisea's business is such that there is always a demand for skilled hunters, trainers, and beast masters in this land.

Aside from its substantial wild animal population, the Amphisean jungles are known to be the haunts of even more dangerous creatures. Included are such sorcerous hybrids as manticores, chimeras, and griffon, survivors of the Great Cataclysm which brought to an end the First Age of Atlantis. These rare beasts are highly sought after by certain eccentric collectors, who have been known to pay up to 10,000 gold pieces for a single, healthy specimen; perhaps a not unreasonable price, considering the risks involved in the capture of such monsters.

AUTOCHTHEA (aw-tow-CHEE-a) (THE SEA OF LOST SOULS)

Though it is still listed in the rolls of the Atlantean kingdoms, the land of Autochthea was destroyed during the Great Cataclysm. Earthquakes and floods devastated the region, which once was home to the original, First Age capitol of Atlantis. The remnants of this once-fabulous kingdom now lie at the bottom of the ocean, in the area known as the Sea of Lost Souls.

In its day, Autochthea was renowned as the most important trading center in the world. Into its ports came ships laden with the spoils of the First Age Atlantean conquerors: gold from Tamoanchan, silver ingots from Mediterranea, diamonds from the coasts of Gondwana, chests of gems from far-off Khitai, and much more. The coffers of its cities overflowed with such incredible riches that many of its buildings were plated with precious metals.

As was the case with much of First Age Atlantis, the vast majority of Autochthea's considerable store of knowledge went with the ill-fated kingdom to a watery grave. In many instances the only surviving sources of information regarding the sunken realm are a handful of legends and the tales told by certain nomadic tribes of Tritons. While some of the old legends are quite colorful (particularly the story of the pyramid-tomb of Hyperion, an Atlantean sorcerer famed for his miserly habits), the accounts of the sea-dwelling Tritons are given a good deal more credence by scholars of the current age.

According to these aquatic wanderers, the ancient capitol of Atlantis lies relatively intact on the ocean floor. Now inhabited by the Tritons, the sunken city serves as the capitol of a vast undersea empire (see Antilla). Other cities, in various states of disrepair, lie submerged some distance to the north, south, and northeast of Attalus (as the Tritons call their capitol).

The northernmost city, called Atalan by the Tritons, is said to be little more than a pile of ancient debris. Giant eels and an occasional sea dragon serve to dismay all but the most reckless explorers in this area. To the south is the city the Tritons call Attla. Formerly an important producer of the costly magical metal known as orichalc, Attla is said to have survived the Cataclysm in relatively good condition. As hordes of scaly-skinned Makara sea devils prowl these ruins, few Triton care much for venturing into this region.

The ruins which lie to the northeast, known to the Tritons as the Ghost City, are also said to be fairly intact. The Tritons claim that the Ghost City was once a wealthy Autochthean trading port, and that the hulks of many sunken vessels still lie chained to their ancient (and now quite submerged), stone moorings. Many of the men who sailed these vessels are also interred here, their skeletal remains littering the decks and holds of their old ships. Not a few have refused to abandon their posts, their undead spirit forms standing watch over mouldering cargoes, worm-eaten logbooks, and rotted gangplanks.

Since tradition requires the Atlantean empire to be divided into ten separate kingdoms, the Queen of Hesperia (representing the colony-realm of Celaenea) now occupies the tenth seat on the Council of Kings. Although awarding a seat on the Council to a Hesperian has never been a very popular decision, most Atlanteans agree that it was — politically speaking — an intelligent move. The folk of Avalon, who claim to be descended from the few Autochtheans who successfully fled the doomed land, have long petitioned the Council of Kings to accept their country as the tenth kingdom of Atlantis; thus far, to little avail. (See Hesperia and Avalon)

AZAE (a-ZAY-e)

Azae is an island, located at the southern end of the River Oceanus, between Amphisea on the Atlantean mainland and the trailing island of Diaprepea. It is a tropical region, very similar in climate and terrain to Hesperia, and like most island realms of any prominence depends upon the sea for survival. Azae is the most active of the three island kingdoms included in Atlantis.

It is the southernmost center of Atlantean power (Diaprepea is too poorly populated to count for much in Atlantean politics). Its northern and eastern deep-water harbors teem with ships, with permanent squadrons from Hesperia and Atlantis on station to guard the merchant traffic — Atlantean, Tharshi, Ophirite, and even the occasional Marhashian or Sheban vessel from far beyond the empire. It is an import economic center, and contributes the second largest share of the Atlantean navy, after Poseidonea.

Transient foreigners comprise nearly half of the population, and the native inhabitants are perhaps the most mongrel of all Atlantean stock. There is little of the original Atlantean appearance about the people of Azae (or Aza, as they are known).

Citizens of the kingdom do not pay taxes, but are required to serve for five years in the kingdom's navy, or pay for a mercenary substitute. Revenues are generated through port fees, import/export tariffs, and through taxation of every sale. Merchants cheerfully tolerate these multiple fees because of the reputation the kingdom enjoys for safety and security. It is proudly boasted that no corsair has ever successfully penetrated the net of Hesperian and Azaen warships which patrol these waters. "Safe as an Azaen merchantman" has become a popular saying. Even so, corsairs occasionally venture into Azae waters hoping to make a big score against the lucrative trading ships that frequent Azae's harbors.

Most of the population is engaged in the navy, trade or trade-related occupations, or as fishermen. The port cities of Azae are basically warehouse villages catering to commerce, with shops, inns, and taverns outnumbering all other business put together. Criminals flourish in Azae, especially thieves; local corruption, though by no means as notorious as in Tharshesh, is commonplace.

Korva (KOR-va) on the Bay of Falga (FAL-ga) is the largest of the port cities; the other major cities of the island include the ports of Karkanna (kar-KAN-na), Gaharba (ga-HAR-ba), and Mamura (ma-MUR-a). The capitol is a city located inland, Surkan (sur-KAN). Like all of the inland villages of Azae, it is less commercialized or cosmopolitan than the ports, and has a far smaller population.

The King of Azae resides at Surkan, which has a sizeable contingent of naval vessels (over two hundred warships) and related military personnel. His influence in the Council of Kings is substantial, but is due more to the strength of the Azaen navy than to the often disreputable character of the monarch himself.

DIAPREPEA

Diaprepea is an island kingdom located between Azae and the coast of Ophir, where the River Oceanus meets the Atlantean Ocean. It is a poor country, much of its arable land having been submerged by floodwaters during the Great Cataclysm. Several of Diaprepea's ancient cities were likewise lost in the deluge, though the citadel of Mehedra (meh-HE-dra), located on a high ridge surrounded on three sides by cliffs, survived unscathed. It is within the walls of Mehedra that most of Diaprepea's population currently dwells.

The people of this region are a dark-skinned folk of most impressive stature, being descended from mixed Atlantean, Ophirean, and Hesperian stock. Traditionally amongst the staunchest supporters of the realm, the Diaprepeans are renowned for their prowess in combat. Both males and females may join the highly regarded Diaprepean infantry, elite units of which have long served as members of the Royal Guard in the capitol of Atlantis.

The city of Mehedra, though having some little importance as a minor trading port, is primarily a military installation. Over a hundred ships from Poseidonea are customarily stationed here, along with a strong contingent of Diaprepean heavy infantry (equipped with partial plate armor, shield, short sword and spear). The ships patrol the waters as far north as Azae, and occasionally escort Ophirean vessels (laden with cargoes of gold and diamonds) en route to other Atlantean ports. Diaprepean infantry often serve as marines aboard the Poseidonean warships stationed in this region.

Aside from the citadel of Mehedra, there are no other settlements of note on Diaprepea, the rest of the isle being swathed in deep jungle. Tribes of Nethermen dwell in the central region, making travel inland a dangerous proposition. On occasion two or more tribes will band together, and thus emboldened, launch attacks against the citadel. To date, no such attack has ever succeeded in breaching the walls of Mehedra.

The King (or Queen) or Diaprepea serves as commander of the military, and must be a skilled warrior with experience in the Diaprepean army. Unlike most other Atlantean heads of state, the ruler of this island kingdom is always elected by popular vote, for a term of six years. The ruler of Diaprepea wields little political power in the Council of Kings due to the small population of the realm, but is nonetheless accorded a great deal of respect; no Atlantean Council has ever gone into battle against the advice of a Diaprepean monarch.

There are First Age ruins on the island, most of them extending from the coasts out into open water. Some of the pyramids that jut out of the offshore waters are said to be dry and undamaged inside, their treasures intact but guarded by fell beings. The most infamous of these is the *Drowned City of Domanu* (do-MA-nu), at the end of the Peninsula of Ad (ad) on the southern side of the island.

ELASSIPPEA (el-a-SIP-pee-a)

The rolling hills of Elassippea were once known as a great center of Atlantean culture, a land of horse-breeding and ship-building where a pastoral countryside was blended with several large, important cities. But Elassippea was tightly linked with the Lost Kingdom, Autochthea, and most of the economy and trade of the kingdom depended upon the cities of Autochthea. The Cataclysm swept away the Lost Kingdom, and with it the best of what Elassippea had built. The dark ages hit the kingdom hardest of all, and indeed the people are only now beginning to revive something of their lost culture.

Elassippea is a southwest-jutting peninsula, bordered by the Sea of Lost Souls, the River Poseidonus, and the Sargasso Sea, with Mnesea to the northwest. The people are racially very close to the original Atlantean norm, having had less intermingling with outside races over the millenia.

Most of the region is undeveloped country, rolling hills and temperate forests. Once a land of farms and pastures second only to the Plains of Gwyddnea as a source of food for the continent, most of the land has long since reverted to wilderness. The inhabitants of the region today are divided between herders and nomadic hunters, two groups who have been able to co-exist peacefully despite the frequent clashes between their two cultures. Elassippean Atlanteans before all else, the people — hunter and herder alike — are proud, independent, and united in respect for their king.

The original royal family, the Line of Elassippus, perished long before the end of the First Age; legend has it that their avarice, cruelty, and capricious treatment of their people compelled a revolt by a band of nobles who had the whole family assassinated. Although the title of king has been retained down to the present, there is a strong hatred of tyranny and arbitrary authoritarianism in Elassippean culture. Though largely pastoral, there are a few small cities in the realm. Zarzis (ZAR-zis) is the capitol, and the only port of any consequence; it is located on the Sea of Lost Souls. It is a bustling place, smaller than the cities of Eudea or Poseidonea, but still a center of trade and commerce. The others are mostly built as focal points of ranching, or as marketplaces where nomads and shepherds can meet. These cities include Suso (SU-so), Paria (pa-RI-a), Motua (mo-TU-a), and Chaha (CHA-ha).

Ruins from the First Age are not uncommon in Elassippea. Many are hideouts for brigands, while some are inhabited by hermits, or by monsters or demons who have made them their lairs. The most infamous of these ruined cities was actually a part of Autochthea, a large city which escaped the floods but succumbed to earthquakes. Helioselen (hee-lee-OH-se-len) is a place of terror and ill-omen, and no Elassippean will willingly speak its name or go within a score of stadia of the place.

EUDEA

Eudea is a small kingdom located on a peninsula which juts outward from the western coast of the Atlantean continent. It borders Poseidonea to the east, with the Sargasso Sea lying to the west, the Sea of Lost Souls to the north, and the Bay of Maelstroms to the south. The people of this region most closely resemble the folk of Poseidonea, having bronze-hued skin, strong features, and straight, black hair. Most Eudeans are above average in height, though typically of slender proportions.

Most of the population of Eudea is concentrated in the central highlands, where the fabulously wealthy capitol city of Goldar (GOL-dar) is located. Goldar is famous as a supplier of manytypes of herbs and plants useful in the preparation of alchemical and magical mixtures. Shipments of these costly goods are transported to the Atlantean capitol by wagon, bringing rich profits to the merchants of this region. The city is also known as a meeting place of Atlantean alchemists and sorcerers, who come here to purchase supplies at wholesale prices (half standard rates). As the city lies on the northwestern shore of the Lake of Lin Lyon (lin LIE-on), it is also a popular vacation place for wealthy Atlanteans.

Eudea's only other major city is Valum Chivum (VAL-um CHEEV-um), a trading port which lies to the west. Vessels bound to and from Eria, Tamoanchan, and Antilla make use of this facility. Several dozen warships of the Atlantean navy are always stationed here, and the port is well-fortified against attack from the sea. Even so, great warrior bands of Makara sea-devils have been known to launch raids against Valum Chivum, and to attack ships which frequent these waters. Friendly bands of Neptus Tritons also come here on occasion to trade with independent barge owners and small merchants. Positions are often available at Valum Chivum for skilled navigators, seamen, cartographers, and mercenary guards and marines.

The King of Eudea, who resides in a grand First Age-style palace at Goldar, is most often a dabbler in alchemy or sorcery. The wealth of Eudea is such that its ruler wields considerable political influence in the Council of Kings; in past years Eudean monarchs have gotten their way in Council by threatening to raise the price of its alchemical wares, particularly those used in the making of such luxuries as aphrodisiacs, love philtres, exotic fragrances, and so on.

GADIREA (ga-DEER-ee-a)

The mountain realm of Gadirea is second only to Poseidonea in strength and stability, having retained much of its First Age power and prosperity. In the First Age, Gadiric power was widespread, and traces of their widespread colonization can still be found in Alba, Iber, Galecea, Aragana, and other neighboring lands.

Gadirea stretches all along the northeastern coast of the continent, bordering Poseidonea in the south, the River Oceanus to the east and northeast, and Mnesea in the west. The western border is the line of the Atlas mountains, which largely isolate the kingdom from the rest of the continent.

The kingdom is primarily noted for its mineral resources. Platinum, gold, silver, tin, iron, and copper are all abundant in the mountains, as are gems and precious stones such as lapis lazuli, amethysts, emeralds, sapphires, and rubies. This vast wealth, mined from the eastern flanks of the mountain range, has made Gadirea the Second Kingdom of the Empire, close behind Poseidonea in power and importance.

Gadirea has the second largest population of the Ten Kingdoms, but though there are a number of cities, only two are really large. Kabir (ka-BEER) is the capitol, an inland city that dominates the major road junction which includes several important north-south routes, and the one link across the mountains into Mnesea as well. The second major city, and Gadirea's only port, is Cardigiawn (kar-DIG-e-awn) on the Bay of Dyved (di-VED). Unfortunately, Cardigiawn is not a very good all-weather port, being virtually useless when the winter winds set in from the northeast. Much of Gadirea's trade — and the mineral products of the kingdom are much in demand in Ys, Tharshesh, and other foreign lands — filters south through the port of Atlantis instead.

The people of Gadirea are an admixture of Atlantean and Mediterranean racial types, bronze-skinned and dark-haired for the most part. The foreign population in Gadirea is very large, and accounts for continuing blending of the races. The climate in the Gadirean mountains is colder and harsher than in Poseidonea, and clothing tends to be heavier and thicker. Furs are more common, with bear, deer, ram, and griffon being popular. Longer, heavier linen tunics are worn by most, and heavy cotton robes are also very common.

The King of Gadirea is supposedly a direct descendant of the Line of Gadieros, son of Poseidon, but in fact, the large foreign element in the Gadiric royal family has made this link tenuous at best. In this day and age, such concerns are strictly a matter of local pride, rather than any real factor in claims of prestige or legitimacy.

MESTEA

The island kingdom of Mestea is the most northerly realm of the Atlantean empire. The people of this isolated land are of average height and build, and are lighter in complexion than their neighbors to the south. Some say they have elven blood in their veins, though it is more likely that Mestean coloration can be attributed to the Vanir of Hyperborea, who once raided the isle in numbers during the Dark Age which followed the Great Cataclysm.

Much of Mestea is undeveloped woodland, interspersed with low-lying mountain ridges and deep gorges. Firedrakes make their lairs in these areas and in the numerous caves which dot the rocky coastline. The forests are said to be infested with ogres, and sightings of Aegir (swamp or bog giants) are not unknown. Most sensible Mesteans avoid traveling into the interior, and keep to the southern coasts. Here are found the only major settlements in Mestea: the fishing port of Promeus (pro-ME-us) and the capitol city of Klymeus (kli-ME-us).

The port of Promeus is a largely uninteresting place frequented only by fishermen and merchants dealing in dried cod and similar goods. Privately, the region enjoys an unsavory reputation as a hideaway for fugitives from Atlantean justice, particularly smugglers of contraband and stolen merchandise. More than a few Cymbrian corsairs are believed to frequent this port, which is notably lacking in effective security measures; a small contingent of marines from Poseidonea is stationed here, most of whom would rather be somewhere else.

The capitol of Klymeus, on the other hand, is a fairly active (if smallish) port city. Located high on a hill overlooking the sea, the city is renowned for its observatory, an ancient facility which dates back to the latter part of the First Age. Having survived the Cataclysm in relatively good condition (thanks to its lofty, hilltop location), the Observatory at Klymeus was abandoned during the Dark Age, when men were less concerned with scientific study than with simple survival. The observatory underwent extensive repair during the early part of the more enlightened Second Age, and is once again in use. Astrologers and archimages from many lands come here to study the movements of the stars and planets, and to predict the course of future events.

Klymeus is often visited by foreign dignitaries and other notables, all seeking advice and counsel regarding the future, and in some cases, the past. The Atlantean Council of Kings is said to consult the high astrologers of Klymeus before instituting any major changes in policy, though there are those who dispute this claim. The city is also notable for its scribes, chart makers, scholars, and wizards, all of whom possess talents useful to the astrologers who live and work here.

Aside from its observatory, Klymeus is known as an exporter of timber, furs, and hides. There is some trade in amber, dredged from recently discovered sites along the northeastern and northwestern coasts. As the demand for Mestean amber increases, there will undoubtedly be an availability of work for skilled miners, seamen, explorers, cartographers, engineers, and mercenary guards; particularly the latter, as Cymbrian and Ska corsairs (and various other conniving entrepreneurs) seek to avail themselves of a share of Mestea's new-found riches.

The King of Mestea must be an astrologer of Mestean birth and considerable skill. His influence amongst the Council of Kings, especially including future plans of the empire, is perhaps second only to the King of Poseidonea.

MNESEA (ne-SEE-a)

Lying on the opposite side of the Atlas Mountains from Gadirea, Mnesea is very similar in topography and climate, and in the abundance of its mineral resources. Gadirea dominates the eastern and northeastern boundaries, while on the northwest Mnesea touches the shores of the foul-smelling Sargasso Sea. Southwest is Elassippea and the Sea of Lost Souls, and Poseidonea lies due south.

Like its eastern neighbor, Mnesea is a land of mines. Iron, tin, gold, silver, and copper are all common in Mnesea, and are fairly important to the local economy. But most of the products of the kingdom are used in Atlantis proper, not shipped overseas. There are no major ports in Mnesea; the northwest coast is choked by the Sargasso Sea and threatened by the depredations of the Makara seadevils, while the sharp indentation of the Sea of Lost Souls is shallow and treacherous, and additionally avoided out of superstition and fear.

Indeed, Mnesea has no major cities comparable in size to the large communities of Poseidonea and other populous Atlantean kingdoms. Though the population of Mnesea is large by the standards of much of the world, so is the land area, and even the capitol, Mneseopolis (ne-see-OP-o-lis), is only a small city. Most centers of population are towns and villages spread through the high mountain valleys and linked by a rather poor road network.

The military organization of Mnesea is somewhat more rigid than is true of other Atlantean kingdoms. Unique among the kingdoms of Atlantis, Mnesea requires mandatory service by all able-bodied citizens in the realm, for a minimum period of five years. The Mneseans claim that their system evolved in the period of the war against the Amazon empire; guerrillas in the mountains of Mnesea were supposed to have been the first to strike a blow for freedom. Mnesean soldiers are also supposed to have been the mainstay of the second Amazon war, in which Hesperia failed to reassert its control in the wake of the civil war with Gorgos. This military tradition is an essential part of Mnesean culture, and remains potent to this day. There is little need of an active military force in Mnesea proper, but the government of the kingdom uses Mnesean troops as mercenary soldiers all throughout the hemisphere. The land is Nubia's chief rival in military affairs, and the soldiers of the two nations have a long-standing enmity which makes it simply unthinkable that Nubian and Mnesean units ever serve together. The Mnesean military is open to both men and women, and is primarily equipped as light infantry. Javelins and slings, backed by short swords, are the most common weapons. Their favored armor consists of strips of lightweight metal attached to a leather tunic, with helmets and arm and leg guards also worn. Military rank is a source of pride and prestige among Mneseans, even after active duty is completed. The mandatory five-year term of service is often followed by one or more additional terms, and a significant percentage of the Mnesean citizenry makes a lifelong career out of the military.

The King of Mnesea rules from the capitol of Mneseopolis. As Mnesea is Atlantis' major supplier of metal ores, his influence in the Council of Kings is not to be underestimated. Deprived of Mnesea's substantial resources, Atlantis would have to import metals from other countries, a proposition few Atlantean kings would care to consider undertaking.

POSEIDONEA (po-SI-do-NE-a)

Traditionally the most prestigious of the Atlantean kingdoms, Poseidonea is even today regarded not only as a great nation in its own right, but also as the center of the Empire. The city of Atlantis is capitol of both the kingdom and the Empire, and has been described as the foremost wonder of the world.

Poseidonea dominates the southern portion of the continent. Amphisea lies due south, and Amazon Celaenea occupies a portion of the eastern coast, with the rest of the east boundary being the River Oceanus itself. The northern boundary is split between Gadirea and Mnesea, while to the west lies ocean and the peninsular kingdom of Eudea.

The people of Poseidonea have the highest proportion of pure Atlantean blood of any of the kingdoms and are thus taller, darker, and more regal in bearing than many of their neighbors.

They prefer short tunics for men and women alike, and are generally found wearing various exotic types of cloth. The upper classes, in particular, favor silk from distant Khitai and similar unusual fabrics.

Poorer people must settle for native linens. Skins and furs from a wide variety of animals native to Atlantis — lion, zebra, tiger, ocelot, jaguar, leopard, griffon, and many others — are also quite popular. In southern Poseidonea, where a hot tropical climate is prevalent, clothing is minimal, except for ceremonial occasions.

Though Atlantis, the city, is magnificent, Poseidonea's grandeur is not confined to this one metropolis. Around the Lake of Llyn Llyon (lin LI-on) are four great Poseidonean cities: Findias (FIN-de-as), Gorias (GOR-e-as), Murias (MUR-e-as), and Falias (FAL-e-as). Each is noted as a center of learning in the fields of magical science and the poetic arts. All four cities are fine examples of Atlantean architecture at its best. Plazas, gardens, monuments, vast amphitheatres and racecourses, and sedate universities are the chief attractions of these cities, with residences extending beyond the city walls onto the plains overlooking Llyn Llyon.

The Plain of Gwyddneu is today, as it always has been, the heartland of Atlantean farming and herding. Plantations and small farming villages still dot the plain, though large areas are now wilderness grazed by herds of wild animals and haunted by bandits and other outcasts. Poseidonea is ruled over by a king who claims direct, patrilinear descent from the line of Atlas, eldest of Poseidon's ten sons.

The kingdom is the most populous (in terms of human inhabitants) in Atlantis, and has the largest foreign population, as well.

THE ATLANTEAN OCEAN (at-LAN-te-an)

The open waters of the Atlantean Ocean are vast and largely uncharted. Where once Atlantean ships plied the sea lanes during the daring days of the First Age, today the old trade routes are hardly ever travelled. A few ships from Atlantis, and an occasional adventurous crew from Tharshesh, can sometimes be found in the northern waters of the ocean; once in a long while, a ship from Tarucua in Tamoanchan crosses over to Atlantis or Gondwana. On the whole, though, the far reaches of the Atlantean Ocean remain untravelled and unexplored in this age of fear and superstition. Though there are many islands in the South Atlantean Ocean, as can be found from study of ancient maps, these are not found on modern charts. For generations, seamen have regarded the existence of any land in the heart of the ocean as completely legendary, convinced that the whole area between Tamoanchan, Atlantis, Gondwana, and the Nether Realm is completely bereft of land of any kind. This widespread belief has made many sailors refuse to sail out of sight of the continental coasts, for fear that they might be lost in unknown waters without hope of a successful landfall.

Though humans and other land-dwellers seldom sail the Atlantean Ocean, the Tritons of Antilla routinely visit these waters. They revel in the absence of land-folk, and in the abundance of sea creatures and unspoiled nature. The Tritons know of the southern islands, though they have not explored them; they are adamant about preserving these regions as they are, and so have never revealed what they know to non-Tritons. Considering the Atlantean Ocean as a last refuge for their tribe against encroachment by outsiders, they do not even let it be known that they travel the deep waters of the central and south Atlantean Ocean.

These waters are far from calm. Ocean currents here are unrelenting, and the weather is violent and stormy more often than not. The eastern ocean floor is sometimes wracked by earthquakes, causing tidal waves, surging currents, and other hazardous conditions. Maelstroms appear intermittently throughout the ocean, and two are permanent features. The whirlpool at Maelstrom Bay off eastern Atlantis is the only one which appears on human maps, the other being in the central ocean. The largest of these — indeed, the largest maelstrom in the world — is called *The Maw* by the Tritons. Its effects reach across nearly a third of the Atlantean Ocean, but it is only a subtle undertow over most of this area. As the traveler approaches the center of the Maw, this current becomes swifter, eventually becoming an irresistible pull that swirls the water and everything in it in ever-decreasing circles over an area hundreds of miles across. At its center is the enormous whirlpool of the Maw. It is said that no mortal human, Triton, or otherwise, has ever been into the Maw and returned to tell of it. It is the one place in the Atlantean Ocean where the Tritons of Antilla never come.

THE ATLANTYDES (at-LAN-ti-dees)

Ancient human maps bear this name to mark a group of five large islands, plus a scattering of smaller ones, deep in the heart of the Atlantean Ocean. The southernmost of the main islands is on the arbitrary boundary between the Atlantean Ocean and the Forgotten Sea. These islands have long been lost to human history, for men travel these waters no longer. The Antillan Tritons call them *The Islands of Solitude*.

There are ancient accounts of these islands in the libraries of Atlantis, though most modern scholars dismiss them as seafarers' legends from the First Age. The weather is said to be pleasant on the northern most of the islands, getting colder and harsh as one travels south. All are said to be uninhabited save by birds and a few small animals.

One tale, said to be based on the eyewitness account of a sailor rescued by the Tritons from a small boat in the middle of the ocean, is especially mysterious. This sailor, a common seaman named

Glaucus, journeyed with an archaeological expedition that sailed to the Atlantydes in the waning days of the First Age. Megalithic ruins, mostly toppled, overgrown, and buried, had been discovered on most of the islands. The southernmost island was found to hold an immense pyramidal structure of unknown origin on a cliff towering over the southernmost promontory.

The sailor Glaucus claimed that his ship anchored in a harbor below the pyramid, christened Haven Bay, and the expedition set out to explore it. At this point his account becomes confused, but it would seem that none in the party actually entered the pyramid. The sailors and scholars began fighting one another for no apparent reason, and seem to have killed one another until only Glaucus was left. He took a boat and fled the island in terror, though of what, nothing is said. When found and aided by friendly Tritons, he was on the brink of death from thirst and exposure, and quite insane.

Scholars dismiss the story as a legend, or the ravings of a madman, but the ancient accounts speculate that some pre-human mystery awaits rediscovery in the Pyramid of the Atlantydes.

CABBALUSA (kah-ba-LU-sa)

Stories of Cabbalusa are common among seafarers, who claim that it is an isolated island located somewhere in the southern reaches of the Atlantean Ocean. Once it may have been meant to be a serious account of a distant land, but today even the sailors who repeat these stories don't believe in them.

By all accounts, it is a veritable paradise, often sounding like a second Ogygia. Scenic cliffs rise high out of the sea, giving way to grassy meadows where flowing streams and crystal pools offer an idyllic retreat for weary sailors. Sea birds, small animals, and gentle breezes are described as adding to the serenity of this quiet land.

The legends also say that Cabbalusa is populated by a race of human-like females, extraordinarily beautiful in all respects, save for their lower legs, which resemble a goat's (shaggy and ending in cloven hooves). These women are supposed to seduce any sailor who lands on their islands with their physical charms and their beautiful, haunting songs. They can supposedly so mesmerize a man that he will not even notice their goat-like extremities. The story also claims that the man who gives in to the seduction of one of these raven-haired temptresses will become her slave for life. The tales claim that many unfortunate seafarers live out their lives as mindless thralls to the Cabbalusan women, besotted with love.

There are those who say these women are witches who serve a terrible Empusa, one of the Greater Demons. Each month, it is said, one of the hapless males is sacrificed to this Empusa; in return, favors are granted to the witches. These typically take the form of deliverance of new males to the island. Sailors claim that storms, navigational errors, and other mishaps to ships at sea (skirting the Gondwanan coasts, for instance) are caused by these witches or their demonic patron.

Now and again, half-mad derelicts in waterfront taverns will claim to have escaped from Cabbalusa, but few believe their stories of pleasure and horror.

HESPERIA (hes-PARE-ee-ah)

The island of Hesperia lies in the great river Oceanus, which flows between the continents of Gondwana and Atlantis. It is a warm and sunny isle, blessed with an abundance of edible plants, fruiting trees, and clear streams.

The inhabitants of this region, known as the Amazons, are a warlike people notable for their female-dominant society. In Hesperia, only women may become warriors, own property, or aspire to positions of importance or influence. The males are considered incapable of performing any but the most menial or physically strenuous tasks.

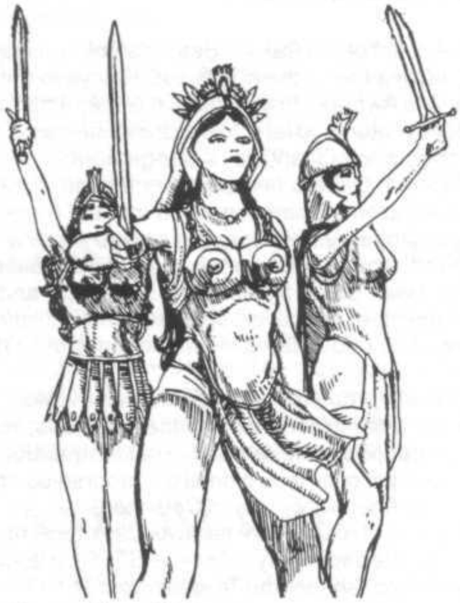
The Hesperians were once the rulers of a mighty empire which rivaled that of the First Age Atlanteans. Natural disasters, wars with neighboring Gorgos, and internal strife caused the collapse of the Hesperian empire some time after the great cataclysm which followed the First Age. The reemergence of Atlantis, an ill-advised war with the nation of Quaddan, and the growth of nearby Ophir and Tharshesh have since served to reduce Hesperian influence in this region. Though the Gorgons and Hesperians are technically still at war, neither possesses sufficient strength to destroy the other, and so a stalemate has been reached.

Despite its setbacks, the Hesperian empire still wields a fair share of power. The Amazon navy is highly regarded, and keeps a constant watch over the river Oceanus area. Though the exact strength of the fleet is kept secret, it is believed to number well over one hundred warships. As private enterprise is not allowed under the monarchy, a separate branch of the navy handles all maritime trade.

The Hesperian army is also well respected, and for good reason. Amazon archers, heavy cavalry, and the elite honor guard (outfitted in partial plate mail and equipped with iron shields, spears, and short swords) are considered amongst the most effective fighting units in the Mediterranean/Gondwanan region. All are well-trained, and morale is consistently high. The Amazon elite cavalry, mounted on unicorns and armed with lances, is arguably among the best light cavalry in the known world. Due to a scarcity of mounts, however, this unit seldom numbers greater than 100 individuals.

Hesperia's trade agreements with Atlantis and Ophir further strengthen the empire. Though technically not allies of Hesperia, both Atlantis and Ophir are believed to have signed mutual defense pacts with the Amazon nations. Trade between the three nations is brisk; in return for precious stones, cattle, wines and produce, Hesperia gets Atlantean steel and Ophirean gold and diamonds.

Hesperian society is rigid and strict in its ways. The Amazon queen is the absolute ruler of her people, designating only such power as she feels is warranted to a select group of female advisors. The queen also holds the position of high priestess of Hesperus (the patron warrior goddess of the Amazon peoples). Along with her advisors, the queen functions as both the military and spiritual leader of the Hesperians (both the queen and her advisors may be considered as Paladins). No other religious beliefs are tolerated on the island, an edict which is punishable by death.



The Hesperians are a handsome people, tall and bronze-skinned with long, dark hair. Few of the women are less than six feet in height; elite troops must by law stand at least six and a half feet tall. Because of the island's balmy climate, clothing is limited to light cotton shifts, flowing capes, and sandals.

The island itself is a virtual paradise, with its well-tended groves, vineyards and fields. In the jungles of the Hesperian interior, hundreds of colorful avian species make their home, filling the air with song. Nymphs haunt the crystal pools and waterfalls, surrounded by a dazzling display of tropical flora. Rising high above the jungle are Hesperia's twin volcanos, Electra and Mena, both inactive since the time of the great cataclysm. Lions and other fierce predators prowl this region, but rarely venture forth into the coastal areas.

It is along the coasts that most of the population of Hesperia dwells, in homes and pavilions of grey and white marble. Gardens and fountains dot the landscap, and many of the roads are paved with rough stone and gravel. Though many of the settlements are quite small (200 to 1200 people), the capital city of Chersonopolis is said to be quite splendid. Like all Hesperian settlements, however, only Amazons are allowed to live there; foreigners of any sort must report to the local guard and state the reason for their visit. If the reason is deemed valid, a one-month pass may be issued.

HESPERIAN COLONIES

The colonial territories of Hesperia are six in number, five in the northern part of Gondwana, and another on the Atlantean coast. Each colony is ruled by a military governor, often referred to as a princess, who commands a small garrison contingent of ground troops numbering 100-200 elite colonial troops plus a fleet of 2-8 ships. Each colony contains a walled stronghold on the coast, usually with sophisticated stone walls and buildings. These forts serve as a base of operations for the governor and her troops, and are considered the "capitols" of their respective colonies.

Each colony supplies goods and resources to the Amazons, who ship them to Hesperia by sea. Though greatly outnumbering the Amazons, none of the natives in these colonies have any say in their government.

ASTEREA (a-STER-ee-a)

Located on the coast of the Sahara Sea, this colony is largely covered by jungle. Taygea lies to the northwest, Halcya to the east, the sea to the north, and Awalawa to the south. It is only a narrow coastal strip, as none dare venture too far into the dread jungles of Awalawa.

The region's original inhabitants, a hunter-gatherer tribe of albinos, are unique to Asterea. Once a fierce warrior people, most are now enslaved by the Amazons. Some have fled into the fringes of Awalawa, preferring a dangerous freedom to a secure slavery. There are some underground movements among the albino tribesmen, and sporadic fighting takes place between these groups and garrison troops. Some of the more radical groups have entered into alliances with the Gorgons, who raid Asterea most frequently of all the colony lands.

Because of the twin problems of rebellion and invasion, the garrison of Asterea is much larger than in other colonies, numbering nearly a thousand troops and three six-ship naval squadrons. It is the most militarily important of all the colonial governorships, though not the most prestigious (that honor falls to Celaenea).

The main resources of Asterea are hardwoods, animal furs, rhinoceri horns, and ivory. The capitol city is Aster (a-STER), a large, fortified garrison town on the coast near the Taygean border.

CELAENEA (sel-AY-nee-a)

This is Hesperia's colony on the Atlantean mainland. It was first conquered in the wars between these two powers in the waning years of the Dark Age, and later given to the Hesperians by treaty. Though it is only a narrow strip on the eastern coast, bordered by Poseidonus on three sides and the River Oceanus on the fourth, Celaenea is looked upon by the Amazons as a symbol of their power and prestige.

Celaenea is the richest of all the Hesperian colonies, and the most populous as well. The governorship of this province is the highest position in the colonial hierarchy, and is almost always entrusted to a close relative of the Queen whose loyalty is certain. It has the distinction of being the only Hesperian territory where foreigners can come and go freely, and the indigenous population is given some freedom from the total slavery common elsewhere in Amazon lands. Still, the Amazons have the only real authority in this province, as in all others.

The lifestyle of the people is superficially much like that which prevails in the rest of Atlantis. However, behind this facade stands the military order of Hesperia. A double-sized colonial garrison is stationed here, as the Queen makes frequent visits. The naval contingent, however, is a single eight-ship squadron.

The capitol of Celaenea is Merina (mer-EEN-a). In addition to the standard fortified military post, there is a large civilian population in this port city, which was built before the coming of the Amazons. It is a major center of trade between Hesperia and Atlantis, and an important stop for traders from other lands as well. It is one of the richest cities in the world, despite its policies of extreme segregation: Hesperians and non-Hesperians are not permitted to mingle socially, and there are separate shops, taverns, and other facilities for each. A Foreigners' Quarter in Merina is set aside for the use of non-Celaeneans; they must stay in this part of the city if they are to remain in Celaenea for more than a month's time.

ELECTA (e-LEK-ta)

Electa is a very strategic colony, for this peninsular province guards the Saharan Straits from the River Oceanus to the Sahara Sea. It has southern landward borders with Maia and Taygea, but is otherwise surrounded by sea. Five naval squadrons are based at the port capitol of Ea (EE-a) to contain the Gorgons within the Sahara, though there are times when Gorgon ships manage to sneak through or fight their way past the Amazons to raid the Oceanus and Mediterranean sealanes.

Electa is the oldest Hesperian colony, and the indigenous population has lost all ties with their former culture that existed prior to their conquest. Now held in total slavery, they are generally meek and deferential to all women, and most men who display the "good, womanly qualities" of firmness, dominance, and decisiveness. They are of medium height and build, have tan skin and dark brown hair.

Ea itself is mostly a naval base and port, with extensive shipbuilding and repair facilities. Taverns and other places of entertainment for Amazon sailors and marines are common. Like Merina in Celaenea, Ea has a large Foreigners' Quarter, primarily for foreign merchants and their dependents.

HALCYA (HAL-see-a)

Located between Asterea and Qaddan, Halcya is primarily remembered as the place where the Amazons were stopped in their attack against Qaddan while attempting to reestablish their empire sometime after the Gorgon wars. The defeat led to a forced truce between Hesperia and Qaddan, and is remembered with bitterness to this day. Halcya is considered the least important colonial post, and is sometimes looked upon almost as a place of dishonor. The Amazons of Halcya tend to be less haughty than those in other domains, partly because of this lack of pride, and partly because the Lotus Cult, which is prevalent here, saps the strength of the warrior people to a degree not generally admitted by anyone in power.

The narcotic Lotus Powder, though not as common here as in Dabba, is the chief resource of Halcya. It is used in trade with Qaddan, and also shipped to Electa for trade with Tharshesh. A local Lotus Cult, by no means as dominant as that of Dabba, but still quite strong, flourishes among the indigenes. There is little threat of revolt, but the addicts tend to do inferior work and so limit both the quality and quantity of production in Halcya.

The Amazons are forbidden from participation in the rites of the Lotus Cult, but many use the narcotic powder anyway. Because Halcya is often a "no-hoper's" post, the incidence of poor discipline, unfitness for duty, and outright incompetence is high here. Periodic attempts to "clean up" Halcya have met with little success.

The capitol, Halcyon (HAL-se-on), is primarily a military station with some trade facilities. A Foreigners' Quarter is reserved for Qaddani merchants and diplomatic entourages. Other foreigners are not generally allowed free travel through the colony. Concessions wrung by Qaddan in the peace treaty have secured a certain degree of freedom for the native population, but their usual submission to Lotus Powder makes this freedom more apparent than real.

MAIA (MA-ee-a)

Maia is the second oldest colonial territory under Hesperian rule. It is essentially similar to Electa, but lacks the major military presence found in that more strategic province. The garrison is of standard size, and is employed for the most part as border guards and internal police. There have been no major conflicts here for many generations. Maia borders on Ophir in the south, Awalawa in the southeast, Taygea to the northeast, and Electa in the north. The western boundary is the coast with the River Oceanus. Though relations with Ophir are sometimes strained, there is believed to be little danger of military adventurism from either nation against the other.

Maia was almost uninhabited before the coming of the Hesperians. The slave population that now exists is descended from forced settlement out of Taygea and Electa. The overall population of Maia is small even today. The capitol city, Mani (ma-NI), has facilities for trade with Ophir, Atlantis, and Tharshesh. The settlement has a very small permanent population, but a constant turnover of transient foreigners. A hut-village outside of the walls of the garrison town, called Manani (ma-NA-ni), supports this influx of travelers.

TAYGEA (ta-GEE-a)

The distinctions between Taygea and Electa are entirely political. They were formerly inhabited by a single native tribe, and were conquered at the same time before being divided for administrative purposes. In most respects, Taygea and Electa are basically similar. The military presence and fervor of the Amazons in Taygea is much less pronounced than in Electa, and the capitol, Tay (TA), has no Foreigners' Quarter. The capitol does have shipyards, and an extensive stockpile of military supplies, but it is primarily a depot and secondary port to back up Ea and Aster alike.

THE CITY OF ATLANTIS

The circular city of Atlantis, 32,000 feet in diameter, is considered amongst the wonders of the Second Age. Modelled after the original First Age capitol (which sank beneath the waves during the Cataclysm), the city's design is a masterful combination of functional and aesthetic principles. Access from the sea is by canal; by land the Atlas, Gadirus, and spiral roads (all paved with stone flags) provide safe and efficient entry into the city proper.

All of the city's major structures are built of finely-hewn blocks of stone. In the tradition of First Age Atlantis, the circular city walls (and certain of the most important government buildings) were plated with various metals: the outer wall with brass, the second wall with tin, and the inner wall with copper and orichalc (a magical metal resembling copper, created by Atlantean alchemists). These structures shine with reflected sunlight during the day, and glisten even on moonlit and starry nights.

The quality of life in the city of Atlantis is generally very good. Citizens are free to do as they please, as long as Atlantean laws are observed. Many of the usual problems of city life (overcrowding, poverty, crime, lack of proper sanitation, etc.) are either non-existent or so minimal as to escape notice. The city's sentries are well-trained, and are notable for their polite but firm manner of dealing with potential troublemakers. As Atlantis is a center of trade and commerce, visitors from other lands are welcome here, provided they act within the boundaries of proper decorum. The four major areas of the city of Atlantis are as follows:

THE ZONES OF WATER

There are three zones of water that delineate the inner city of Atlantis. They are known simply as the Inner Ring, the Middle Ring, and the Outer Ring. Only in the Inner Ring is water-traffic controlled; ships must have valid reasons for entering the military-controlled Inner Ring or they will be turned back. Water traffic flows freely in the other two rings. Each zone of water is equipped with wharves, associated shipyards and warehouses. Travel between the zones of water and land is facilitated by subterranean ramps extending from the wharves up to the surface land zones, and by narrow stairways winding up the outer face of the metal-clad walls.

THE MAJOR ZONE OF LAND

The Outer Ring island is famous for its horse track which is one stadia wide (607 feet) and runs the entire length of the island. On either side of the track are businesses, parks, public baths, and military stations. Events are held everyday, drawing large crowds of Atlanteans and travelers.

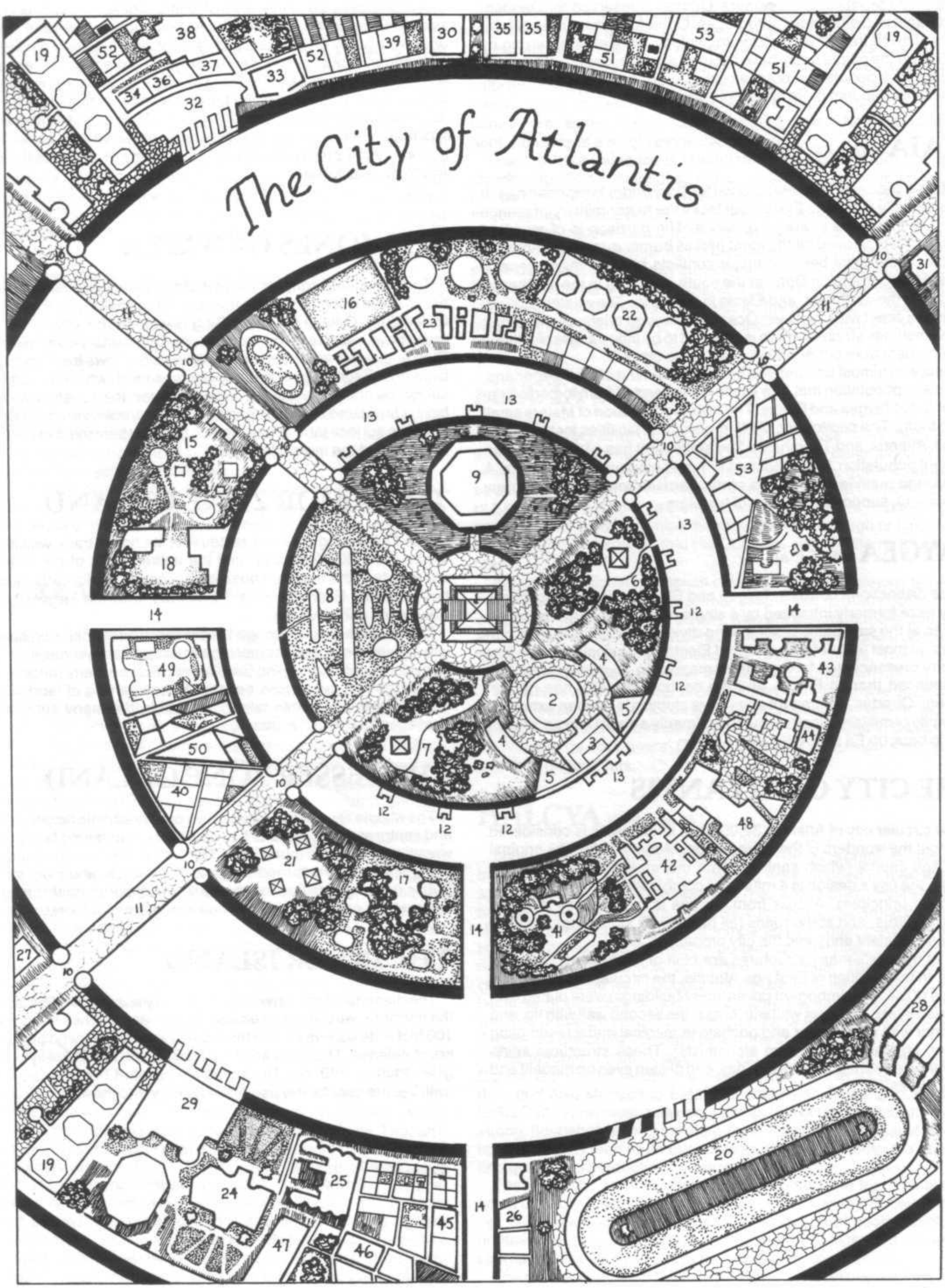
The canal that cuts through the southern axis of the ring opens up into a fully equipped subterranean shipyard. Although privately owned, it is patrolled by the City Guard because many tunnels (some long forgotten) criss-cross beneath the entire ring of land. Strange occurrences sometimes take place within the many subterranean passages found in this area.

THE LESSER ZONE OF LAND

The Middle Ring of the city is given over to athletic facilities, parks, and sentry stations. Several ball courts, track and field facilities, and wrestling arenas are found here. The park areas are well tended, and many are lavishly adorned with marble, bronze, and ivory statuary. Public docking facilities line the walls which surround this area, and city sentries patrol the Lesser Zone with great regularity.

THE INNER ISLAND

The diameter of the central isle of the city is 3,035 feet (5 stadia). At the northern, western, and eastern bridge-approaches to the isle are 100 foot wide gateways. The three gates are each flanked by twin towers of defense. The walls are 75 feet high, and the archways of each gate reach up 100 feet. Docks radiate outward from the isle's outer wall, but are only for the use of the military and the royalty.


The City of Atlantis
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THE CITY OF ATLANTIS

1. THE PYRAMID TEMPLE OF POSEIDON

The largest pyramid in the world, and the center of Atlantean Empire politics. The orichalcum Pillar of Law stands within a sacred inner room at the exact center of the pyramid, and a golden fence surrounds the temple atop the pyramid. The outer walls are plated with a thin coating of silver. The pyramid-temple is only open to the public on four days of each year (on the equinoxes and solstices), and is heavily guarded by members of the elite Royal Guard (armed with halberd, short sword, and scale mail).

2. THE ATLAS HIPPODROME

A center for athletic events and circuses. Performers and athletes entertain the royal families and wealthy citizenry. This arena is most prestigious; only the most expert athletes and performers are invited. Gladiatorial combats and other special events are also held here on occasion. Admission ranges from 20-200 G.P., depending on seating.

3. THE PYRAMID PALACE OF POSEIDONEA

The royal palace of Poseidonea's ruling family, this impressively gilded half-pyramid radiates inward from the orichalcum-plated wall surrounding the Inner Island. Expansive quarters within and atop the half-pyramid house the royal family, chief advisors, and select members of the elite Royal Guard.

4. THE LESSER PALACES

These two apartment-like palaces flank the Atlas Hippodrome, and are the residences of court officials and officers of the Royal Guard. Not open to the public, these buildings are impressively gilded and adorned with many artistic treasures.

5. THE PYRAMID FORTS OF ATLAS AND POSEIDON

The two structures flanking the Pyramid Palace are the barracks, supply-stores, and final defense of the city's military. Emanating inward from the Inner Island wall, these structures are always bustling with activity. Catapults line the platform roof, and narrow stairways lead down the outer face of the wall to the military docks below. The western structure is that of Atlas; the eastern that of Poseidon. As many as twenty divisions are garrisoned at each fort during times of trouble.

6. THE GROVE OF POSEIDON

A great variety of trees and flowers adorn the sacred Grove, which is the center of Atlantean worship. Dedicated to Poseidon, the rituals enacted here have remained unchanged since the First Age. The outflow of spring water from the Baths of Poseidon are channelled underground to the Grove, which they ring thrice. A silver-plated pyramid shrine stands at the center of the Grove. Within its sacred recesses are the residences of the high priests and priestesses of Poseidon, Cleito, and Atlas. More than three dozen priests and acolytes tend the grounds.

7. THE GROVE OF THE WHITE BULLS

Within this holy grove live the sacred white bulls that are sacrificed by the King of Poseidonea at the beginning and end of each Council of Kings (held every fifth and sixth year). Like the Grove of Poseidon, this is ringed by three streamlets fed by the Baths of Poseidon. There is also a pyramid shrine within the center, dedicated to the ten founding brother-kings of the Atlantean Empire.

8. THE BATHS OF POSEIDON

The most luxurious of all Atlantean public bath parks, these indoor and outdoor bath-houses are fed by two springs, one hot and one cold. The outflow of waters are channelled underground to the two groves on the Inner Island, and then out to the encircling canal. The bath-houses are segregated as to sex and species (animals also have facilities here). Each is gilded, magnificently furnished, and may be used free of any charge.

9. ROYAL AMPHITHEATRE

A center for the performing arts, lectures, and philosophical debates, presented to the public free of charge. Statues of famous Atlantean statesmen, scholars, and performers ring the outside of the amphitheatre.

10. THE BRIDGE TOWER GATES

These three-story stone towers flank each of the bridges built across the three circular city canals. Each tower has an orichalc-plated iron gate, and is manned by twenty sentries and twenty archers. A toll of 1 S.P. is charged at all such gates, and the sentries have the right to turn away less-than-respectable-looking individuals.

11. BRIDGES OF THE INNER CITY

These megalithic stone bridges contain numerous secret passages and guard rooms within their structures, and are constantly patrolled by sentries from the guard towers.

12. THE ROYAL MILITARY SHIPYARDS

Lining the southern half of the inner wall are the private shipyards of the kingdom of Poseidonea. Only royal and Atlantean military vessels are allowed to dock here. Included are facilities for ship repair, construction, and maintenance, plus extensive storage and work sheds. The facilities can accommodate ships up to trireme (war galley) size; larger ships cannot traverse the canals leading into the inner city.

13. THE QUEEN'S SHIPYARD

A larger version of the Royal Military Shipyards, this facility is available for use by all sailors and merchants visiting the city.

14. THE CANALS

The canals of the city are marvels of megalithic construction. Each has its own private docking facilities (available for rent at a cost of 100 G.P. per month), with small "harbors" located at the middle of each canal. The "harbor" areas may be used by small craft only (no charge). A toll (equivalent to 1 G.P. per foot in length of the craft) is charged to all vessels wishing to enter the canal.

15. CALYPSO PARK

An attractive public facility featuring beautiful shrines, monuments, gardens and fountains. Many exotic animals (all benign) roam the fenced-in premises, which are open to the public by day. The park is patrolled by mounted sentries.

16. URANUS GYMNASIA

An outdoor facility used as a practice field for many of Atlantis' finest athletes, and open to the public year round.

17. BASILEA PARK

An attractive area decorated with flowering shrubs, rose gardens, lily ponds, marble benches and walking paths. This park is a popular trysting place for young lovers, and is only occasionally patrolled by mounted sentries.

18. SATURNUS GYMNASIA

An outdoor facility used primarily by animal trainers and equestrians. The facility is open to the public.

19. MILITARY STATIONS

Each of these barracks/office complexes is manned by a sergeant and a dozen or more sentries. Three-man units patrol the areas surrounding each of these stations in rotating shifts. Each station is also equipped with a 10 x 10 x 10 ft. holding cell.

20. RACING ARENA

A large outdoor facility which includes a one-mile race track, grassy slopes (for commoners) and colorful pavilions (for the wealthy). Chariot and horse races are held each day, and betting is heavy on most events. Admission ranges from 1 S.P. to10 G.P. Vendors hawking honey cakes, wine and ambrosia are found throughout the arena.

21. SHRINES OF THE ELEMENTALS

These four pyramidic shrines are dedicated to the true elementals, beings of great power who represent the forces of nature. Each is dedicated to one of the four elemental forces: earth, wind, water, and fire. Local paganist cults come here occasionally to offer gifts to the true elementals, along with certain orders of witches and warlocks.

22. PUBLIC BATHS

Large facilities famed for its mud baths, which are reputed to have medicinal properties. This place is very popular with visitors to Atlantis, many of whom travel great distances to experience the purported effects of these baths.

23. MILITARY FACILITIES

These twelve structures each house barracks, stables, armory, and training facilities for the Atlantean and Poseidonean army. War chariot units are also stationed here. Each facility is normally manned by ten or more divisions of varying description.

24. INN OF THE CRIMSON MOON

A spacious tavern and inn famed for its excellent cuisine and outdoor terraced gardens. It is frequented primarily by high-ranking Atlantean military personnel and other influential types. Prices are high (three times standard rates), and only respectable-looking individuals are allowed entry.

25. HOUSE AT THE RAINBOW'S END

A high-class courtesan's parlor which caters to the wealthy. It is said that some of the world's most beautiful women are employed here, a claim reflected in the establishment's exorbitant prices (five times standard rates for all food and drink, 100-1,000 G.P. for the favors of a courtesan). Many of Atlantis' most influential personages frequent this place in the late evening hours.

26. THE SILVER UNICORN

A comfortably accoutered tavern and inn catering to patrons of Atlantis' many athletic and sporting events. The proprietor takes bets on most such events, and the establishment provides dice tables for customers who favor other games of chance. Prices are about 20% above standard rates, and the quality of service is usually good. The Silver Unicorn is occasionally frequented by athletes, gladiators, and charioteers, a feature which draws even more customers to this popular tavern.

27. THE GILDED DRAGON

A seedy version of The Silver Unicorn, frequented primarily by gamblers and other less-than-savory elements of Atlantean society. Prices are average, as is the quality of service.

28. SEVEN STARS STABLES

Horses scheduled to compete in the arena are most often quartered here. The stables also provide breeding services, and register new riders and mounts for many racing events. Once a month, prospective race and show horses are auctioned on the premises. Prices for stable services are expensive (twice standard rates), but of high quality. Most equipment associated with riding is also available here, at standard rates.

29. THE EBONY DOLPHIN TRADE CO.

A docking and warehouse complex owned by one of Ophir's wealthiest merchants. The company has about a half-dozen vessels, and is the main importer of Ophirean gold and ivory. Experienced adventurers are often hired to help augment security, occasionally in return for free passage to Gondwana.

30. THE SEA NYMPH BAZAAR

An outdoor marketplace which features a variety of goods from the Mediterranean region, including Tharshi silver (jewelry, utensils, and certain types of weaponry), Hyperborean amber, charms and talismans (from the gypsy Rom peoples), and herbs from the Black Forest region. Prices are often quite high (two to three times standard rates). Due to the poor relations which exist between Atlantis and Tartessos, most of the wares sold here have been smuggled into the country. All of the vendors who work the bazaar will purchase goods from independent traders and adventurers.

31. INN AT THE RIVER'S END

An inn, tavern, and brothel which caters to merchants, traders, and seafarers. Price and quality of service are variable; in essence, you get what you pay for in this establishment. The proprietor (a Qaddani) keeps several Nubian mercenaries on hand to keep the peace. Their presence is enough to deter most troublemakers, their expertise being sufficient to dispatch the rest.

32. HORIZON TRADE ENTERPRISE

This establishment provides ships and crews for hire for any trade or travel-based endeavor. Costs for ship rental range from 200-2,000 G.P. per week, depending on the size of the vessel. A deposit or bond (equal in value to one-third the rented vessel's assessed worth) must be posted with the proprietor as insurance against any mishap. Crew costs are 25% above the standard rates for such hirelings. Many independent traders lease ships from this establishment, which is considered quite reputable.

33. GRYPHON WAREHOUSE

An extensive facility providing storage space for the cargoes of merchant vessels. Cost to store goods of any sort is 1 S.P. per square foot, per day. A security force of Nubian, Qaddani and Ophirean mercenaries guards the warehouse complex night and day.

34. SEAMEN'S GUILD

Sailors, navigators, and marines are available for hire here at standard rates. Guild membership costs 10 G.P. per year.

35. ROADSIDE MARKET

Small shops and stalls line both sides of this road, which is much travelled by merchants, peddlers and prospective buyers. The types of vendors found here include butchers, bakers, chandlers, fish mongers, potters, weavers, tanners, tinkers, etc. Prices and quality vary.

36. TRADESMEN'S GUILD

Carpenters, masons, engineers, laborers, drivers, and bearers may be hired here at standard rates. Guild membership costs 1 S.P. per month.

37. TITAN STONE QUARRIES

A dealer in marble, granite, and other types of cut stone. The actual quarries are located in the Atlas mountain range. Many stone masons and laborers are employed here, and the Atlantean proprietors (three brothers) are architect/engineers. Prices are 10-20% above standard rates, and quality is very good.

38. THE CYCLOPEAN FORGES

Largest establishment of its kind in the known world. Many of the finest metal craftsmen are employed here, including Ophirean goldsmiths, Tharshi silversmiths, dwarven armorers (from Hyperborea), and Atlantean smiths skilled in metal plating. Costly items made of the magical metal, orichalc, are available here, though demand often exceeds supply (1-20% chance that orichalc items of any sort will be in stock on any given day). Prices are 50% above standard rates, but quality is always excellent. Custom work is available at three times standard rates.

39. THE REQUISITIONER

A general store featuring a diverse range of low cost/average quality goods. Most types of supplies and provisions (such as oil, road rations, rope, tools, weapons, leather goods, etc.) are available here.

The proprietor is a retired adventurer who claims to have travelled to many strange and exotic lands.

40. ATLANTEAN IMPORTS

This establishment specializes in furnishings, clothing, and curios imported from the continents of Jambu and Gondwana. The proprietor, a Sheban merchant, will pay good money (20-50% above standard rates) for quality goods from either of these two regions. Prices are two to three times standard rates, but all items sold here are of very high quality.

41. OCEANUS PARK

An extensive park facility replete with hanging gardens, paved walkways, and ornate brass gazebos. The park is often frequented by students and faculty from the nearby university complex, and is patrolled at night by sentries.

42. UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

A highly respected institute devoted to the arts, with separate facilities for the study of music, metal and gem crafts, chirography, sculpture, painting, and the performing arts. Tuition is 50 G.P. per month. Many master artisans are employed here as tutors and lecturers. The university also has a shop where related equipment and supplies may be purchased (prices are 10% above standard rates).

43. THE INSTITUTE OF KNOWLEDGE

A massive, government sponsored university complex with separate facilities for the study of Alchemy, Sorcery, Astrology, Engineering, Horticulture, Ancient Lore, Cartography, Linguistics, Theology, and the Healing Arts. Tuition is expensive (200 G.P. per month), and only qualified applicants (individuals with above average intelligence) are accepted. The Institute's library is well-regarded, but is open only to students and faculty. Only the Magical Institute of Dardanus is thought to have better facilities for the study of Alchemy. Non-magical supplies and equipment are sold in an adjacent shop (average prices, no alchemical mixtures available).

44. THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

A tavern and inn catering primarily to students and faculty from the nearby institutes. An outdoor garden, complete with marble benches and terraces, adds to the appeal of this popular establishment. Prices are about average, and the quality of services is good.

45. PANTHEON SUPPLY

A small shop specializing in religious articles (various denominations), ceremonial vestments, and such ritual supplies as incense, candles, and fragrant oils. Prices are generally high (twice standard rates), but quality is very good.

46. ATLANTEAN MAGICAL AND ALCHEMICAL SUPPLY

An excellent establishment renowned throughout the region for the superior selection and quality of its wares. Most alchemical and magical equipment and supplies (including mixtures) are sold here, and scrolls, minor magic items, and other magical paraphernalia are often available. The two Atlantean proprietors (husband and wife) are both sorcerers of some ability. Prices are very high (three times standard rates and up).

47. ALCHEMISTS'/SORCERERS' GUILD

The only magical guild house in Atlantis, the Alchemists'/Sorcerers' Guild has extensive lab and research facilities on the premises. Lab space is available at standard rates, as are most ingredients and equipment. Apprentice and initiate training is available at a cost of 100 G.P. per month. Membership costs 1,000 G.P., plus 200 G.P. per annum. The Guild offers separate registry services for apprentices, initiates, minor adepts, adepts, and masters, and sponsors an awards banquet each year. Categories include: "Outstanding Achievement" (alchemy and sorcery, 10,000 G.P. each), four 5,000 G.P. research grants, and several lesser awards. All facilities and benefits are open only to Guild members.

48. ATLANTIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A large museum complex associated with the Institute of Knowledge (#43). Hundreds of ancient artifacts, many dating back to the bygone First Age, are on display here; countless others are stored in the museum's subterranean vaults. Sponsored by the government, the historical society funds archaeological and exploratory ventures of many types. A ten-man council of scholars allocates funds for all such missions, and awards grants of 2,000-20,000 G.P. to qualified adventurers and explorers who wish to work for the Society. The museum facilities are heavily guarded by government sentries.

49. WORLD PARK

A public facility of enormous size and scope. Most of the world's nations are represented here, each having a garden, fountain, walkway or statue named in its honor. The park is a major attraction for visitors to Atlantis, and is frequently crowded. Admission is free. Though a large crew of sentries and gardeners tend the park by day, it is not often patrolled by night.

50. ATLANTEAN RESIDENCIES

Most Atlanteans live in these sectors, which are clean, well-constructed, and efficiently designed. Each community is self-sufficient, and has its own markets, water supply, and small militia (20-100 sentries, all residents of the areas which they guard).

51. HESPERIAN QUARTER

A sector populated almost entirely by Amazons from Hesperia and her colonies. By Atlantean decree, the laws and customs of Hesperia are permitted to prevail within the boundaries of this quarter. A number of small shops and one tavern (*The Hesperus Inn*) are found here.

52. MEDITERRANEAN QUARTER

A somewhat run-down section of the city populated primarily by immigrants, travelers, and merchants from the Mediterranean region. Various Mediterranean customs prevail, but this sector is governed by an Atlantean regent. A contingent of 100-140 Atlantean sentries is employed here at all times. Many small shops, several temples, and one tavern (the notorious *House of the Black Hawk*, frequented primarily by undesirables and malcontents) are found in this sector as well.

53. GONDWANAN QUARTER

A sector populated primarily by wealthy merchants from Qaddan, Nubia, and Ophir. Unlike the Mediterranean Quarter, this area of the city is quite attractive, and its shops and taverns are often frequented by Atlanteans (*The Ivory Palace*, a high-priced tavern/inn featuring exotic entertainment and imported Gondwanan specialties, is especially popular). The Quarter is governed by an Atlantean regent, but Nubian mercenaries form the bulk of the sector's security forces.

ANTILLA (an-TIL-a)

Antilla is one of the most unusual regions in the Atlantean world. *Though references are made to the "Land of Antilla," in truth barely* five percent of the entire region lies above the surface of the ocean. For the most part, Antilla lies under water, submerged to an average depth of perhaps 20 feet. It is a great undersea plateau, perhaps once a true island continent populated by a variety of aquatic species of plants and animals, including the Triton (water-breathing humanoids).

This submerged landscape rises high above the ocean floor. To the east, on the Atlantean side of Antilla, the great oceanic cliff spans 12,000 feet; on the western side, there are places where an Antillan plateau is 18,000 feet above the depths, far from the light of sun or moon. The mean span of this magnificent escarpment is well over 15,000 feet.

The great palisades support an abundance and variety of undersea life, from the smallest fish up to the awesome leviathan of the deeps. There are innumerable species of sea plants growing in underwater jungles on the plateau roof, some having potent magic or healing properties much prized by man and Tritons alike. A large number are edible, and are both a staple in the diet of the Triton inhabitants and a haven for the various forms of undersea fauna hunted to provide the balance of the Triton food supply.

Many of these plants grow to immense heights, some reaching above the surface of the sea. Some send up stalks and leaves twenty or thirty feet above the water; a grove of such plants can give a convincing illusion of land. A human could stand and move about around these living platforms, but only the most agile can avoid falling through the treacherous gaps between them or toppling whole sections of the grove.

It is vegetation like this, and chokingly thick subsurface foliage as well, that makes it almost impossible to cross over the Antillan plateau in any but the smallest of watercraft. Only creatures bred to the sea can easily maneuver these tangled waters, either on or below the surface.

Overall, the region of Antilla and the waters around it are almost totally alien to the familiar surface world. The obstacle to travel presented by these waters — including the adjacent Sargasso (sar-GAS-oh) Sea — is one of the main reasons why the continent of Eria has remained virtually untouched by Atlantis and its eastern neighbors.

Antilla has been divided into three regions, each the realm of an individual member of the Greater Tribes of Antilla, the Tritons who live in the underwater world. These regions are Sahuga (sa-WA-ga), Neptus (NEP-tus), and Sargo (SAR-go). In addition to these three regions of "mainland" Antilla, other prominent regions adjacent to the plateau waters are also worthy of note: the canyon of Neptune, the Antillan Channel, and the Sargasso Sea.

There is some land in Antilla, lonely hilltops above the plateau which rise out of the water to form a few scatterd islands. Most of these "lofty" heights are sacred to the Tritons as ceremonial spawning grounds, especially those found in the central part of Antilla. Other islands at the perimeter of the plateau are not regarded as inviolate, and indeed a few are set aside for the use of human traders who visit the land.

The central islands take on many forms. Some are rounded, mist-shrouded hillocks hardly distinguishable from the surface vegetation, lush, muddy, and gently undulating (these are the prime spawning grounds). Rugged pinnacles sometimes soar higher above the waves, jutting defiantly towards the distant sky. These spires are often shot through with rich outcroppings of precious stones of all kinds, and are sometimes used as council towers.

On the sacred islands, outsiders who trespass face an age-old and harshly enforced penalty of death.

The Tritons

Though the Triton inhabitants of Antilla divide themselves into three *distinct tribes, the three work together in cooperation and harmony.* The distinctions are more a matter of tradition and pride than anything else, for the Tritons of Antilla underplay the concept of group identity favoring the expression of individuality and freedom.

They display an attitude of distrustful neutrality towards most outsiders and make no effort to negotiate treaties or deal with national governments. Even those who win the trust of a particular Triton band will find that this guarantees no special friendship with other bands of the same Great Tribe, much less the support of any of the other tribes.

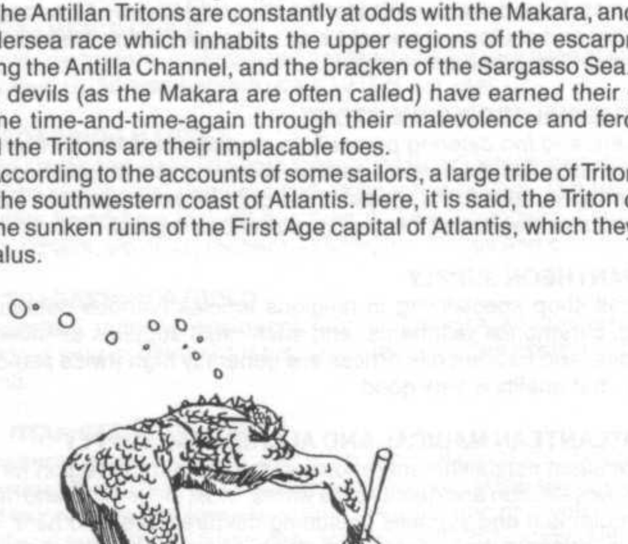
Basically, every Triton in Antilla has the right to make his or her own decision on any matter in which that individual is involved, a decision which is binding only to that individual (and non-adult family members). The Great Tribes each have a chief, but these are merely individuals honored for their descent from ancient Antillan sages. They are permitted to propose ideas, but never to make decrees or agreements that apply to other Tritons. Only if every Triton in a given tribe *agrees to some measure will it be adopted.*

The Antillan Tritons do, however, have certain agreements with other peoples. Most of these agreements (or treaties) are quite unimportant, with two exceptions: the Antillans have long-standing mutual defense pacts with the River Tritons of Hesperia. As both treaties apply only in the event of a war, interaction between Antilla and its "allies" is limited to the occasional exchange of ambassadors and couriers.

Each of the three great tribes, Sargo, Neptus, and Sahuga, is subdivided into many bands, or Lesser Tribes. Any group of more than one kinship living in close proximity is a Lesser Tribe, while family groups are Bands. The Tritons are scattered throughout the Antillan plateau in innumerable groups of this kind.

The Antillan Tritons are constantly at odds with the Makara, another undersea race which inhabits the upper regions of the escarpment along the Antilla Channel, and the bracken of the Sargasso Sea. The sea devils (as the Makara are often called) have earned their nickname time-and-time-again through their malevolence and ferocity, and the Tritons are their implacable foes.

According to the accounts of some sailors, a large tribe of Triton live off the southwestern coast of Atlantis. Here, it is said, the Triton dwell in the sunken ruins of the First Age capital of Atlantis, which they call Attalus.



NEPTUS (NEP-tus)

The Great Tribe that inhabits the southeastern region of the Antillan Plateau interacts more with outsiders than do either of the other Great Tribes. Consequently, members of the tribe are noticeably more tolerant of non-Tritons than those of Sargo or Sahuga. However, they expect foreigners to learn from experience; repeated offenses are not tolerated once acceptable behavior has been explained.

Neptus Tritons have had extensive contact over the centuries with Atlanteans of all kinds. As a result, the two cultures have some understanding of one another. Of other nations and peoples the Neptus Tritons have far less knowledge, for contact with outsiders is infrequent.

The Neptus tribe is the most peaceful of the Antillans, for they are less exposed to the raids of the Makara. Their people follow the individualistic ideals of the Antillans most closely, with society structured around a highly flexible free-form democracy. Stature in the community is an indication of the respect of fellow citizens.

SAHUGA (sa-WA-ga)

The most religiously inclined of Antilla's Tritons are the members of the shamanistic Sahuga, who dominate the portion of the plateau that bears their tribe's name. They are a mysterious people, keeping certain of their rituals and traditions secret even from Tritons of other tribes. Where outsiders are concerned, they are aloof most of the time. They interact only when it suits their needs, and do not enter into long or complex agreements.

At an early age, Sahuga Tritons are indoctrinated into the ways of their shamanistic cult. As a result, all members of the tribe are versed in certain rudimentary shamanic disciplines. Some are shamans of frightening power, though most are only of average ability. Their power animals are usually dolphins, which they employ vs. the Makaras' shark companions.

Food is gathered by the youngest and least experienced members of the tribe. Those of the greatest power are concerned with conducting rituals, extending their knowledge, and defending their territories. The Sahuga concentrate in the south central, inland area of their side of the plateau; the perimeters are infested with the Makara of the Antillan Channel, who wage almost unceasing warfare on the Sahuga.

SARGO (SAR-go)

The densely foliated seascape of Sargo lies close by the Sargasso Sea, and indeed is the source of much of the weed which chokes that region. Sargo is home to the tribe of the same name, a gathering culture which transplants food plants from the "jungles" of Sargo to areas near the Sargo dwelling places. They are skilled horticulturists, successfully growing a number of different and exotic species of undersea vegetation.

The Sargo tribe is isolated from the world at large, and is in regular contact only with other Antillan Tritons — and with the Makara of the Sargsso Sea. The sea devils, ancient and implacable enemies of the Triton race, are a constant problem for the Sargo tribe. The isolationist policies of these Tritons can be directly traced to their constant battles with the Makara. They treat all foreigners with extreme distrust, and it is nearly impossible for an outsider to establish a beneficial interaction with members of the Sargo tribe.

Because continual warfare is the rule in Sargo, their culture emphasizes the arts of war and the career of the warrior above all. They consider death in combat (particularly against the Makara) as the only fitting end to a life filled with fierce competition and strife. They are an honorable people, though quick to anger and swift to avenge any insult or transgression. Their word, once given, is never broken.

The entire status system of Sargo society is based on prowess and fighting skill. Non-lethal combat duels regulate rises and falls in social status; the winner gains or maintains status, the loser drops in status. To keep any position, one must meet and vanquish at least one challenger of lower rank each year. The duelists usually battle with net and trident, the object being to entrap or entangle (rather than cause harm to) the opponent. Duels to the death are rare amongst the Tritons themselves, though trespassers into their realms may occasionally be challenged to such contests.

ANTILLAN CHANNEL

The Antillan Channel divides Antilla's plateau from the continental shelves of Eria and Tamoanchan. The sea floor of the channel is over 20,000 feet deep in some spots; the Antillan side of the channel is nearly as deep (18,500 feet is common). The Erian and Tamoanchan sides are frequently much shallower, sometimes as little as 1,000 feet down.

The swift-coursing waters of the channel are rich in large schools of fish, including tuna and cod in the northern reaches. These food resources are rarely exploitable by Tritons or by men, but they do support the scaly-skinned Makara sea devils who thrive in the region.

Large numbers of these malevolent humanoids roam the waters between Antilla, Eria, and Tamoanchan. They menace the shores of all three continents, and interfere with the passage of travelers attempting to navigate the channel. So great is the Makara threat that only the most daring or foolhardy of voyagers even attempt the journey anymore. Contact between the humans of Eria and Tamoanchan and the Tritons of Antilla is consequently infrequent at best.

THE CANYON OF NEPTUNE

The jagged undersea Canyon of Neptune cuts through nearly to the center of the Antillan Plateau, running roughly due north from its opening on the southern cliff palisade to its farthest penetration in the heart of Antilla. The central depth of the canyon is almost constant at 17,000 feet below the surface. Sheer cliff faces drop from the plateau's top deep into the ocean floor.

The canyon is rich in sea life of every description. Many species are unique to this region, which has a whole ecology of its own. The most abundant of animal life forms is the eel, and giant members of the eel family are caught and trained as war steeds by the Tritons. Hippocampi are also found here, and have been domesticated by the Tritons.

This great canyon serves as a major "political" boundary in Antilla, delineating the border between the Neptus and Sahuga tribes. The head of the canyon marks the point where the ranges of all three Great Tribes meet, and underwater caves at that junction serve as meeting places between members of the three Great Tribes.

Indeed, there are a multitude of caves in both walls of the canyon, some extending far into the subcontinental mass of Antilla. The subterranean Maze of the Tritons winds all the way across the plateau from the canyon of Neptune to the Antillan channel. The passages are winding and labyrinthine, with many confusing twists and dead ends. But there is one highly intricate path that leads through from one side to another. It is guarded by the Sahuga tribe, the most powerful shamans of that group guarding the secrets of the passage.

The Sahuga employ the passage as a test of courage, skill, and power for those who seek to achieve honored status in the tribe. The passage is fraught with peril; many who have entered in the Canyon of Neptune have never reached the other side. Few non-Sahuga Tritons are permitted to enter the Maze, and non-Tritons are never allowed within.

According to legend, the precious stones and metals that are set in the rock walls of the Maze could fill the treasuries of the world three times over. Though this is probably a great exaggeration, the caves are indeed filled with a profusion of riches, from gemstones to pearls, corals, and old coins washed up from the sea bottom.

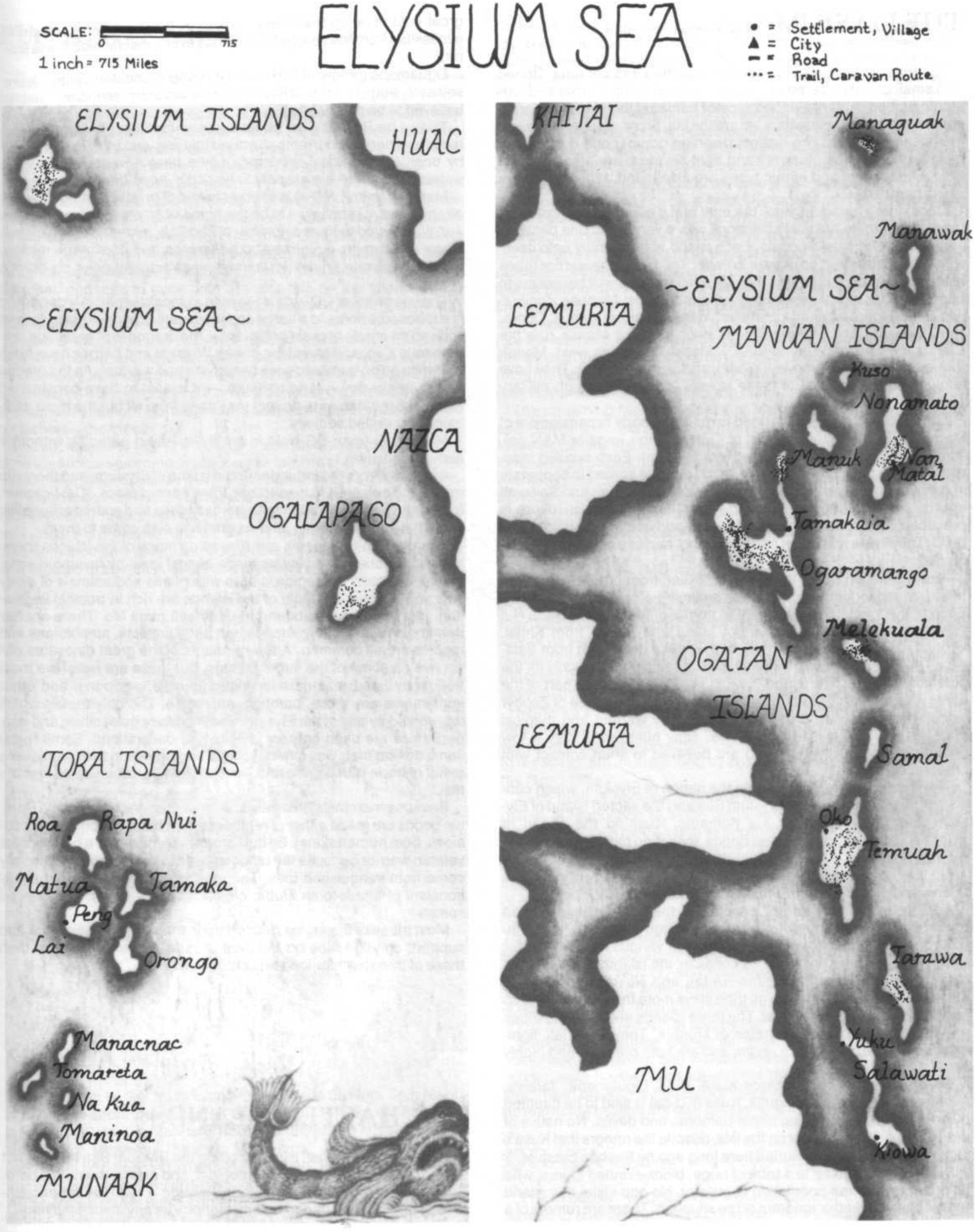
SARGASSO SEA

Amidst the dark and eerie environs of this undersea forest can be found numerous curiosities: sunken vessels entangled in giant strands of kelp, the skeletal remains of monsterous sea creatures, the mouldering corpses of men lost at sea, and other, less recognizable things. Giant eels, sea dragons, and vile kraken (immense, squid-like horrors possessed of a malevolent intelligence) prowl the lower depths, hungering for fresh victims. Here too, dwell the masters of this watery domain: the scaly-skinned humanoid beings known as the Makara.

The Makara are an ancient race who have long sought to gain dominance over the seven seas. They are found in many parts of the world, but are especially numerous in the Sargasso Sea region. Traditional foes of the race of Tritons, the Makara are no more fond of humans, who they view as invaders into their territories. Large bands of these sea-devils (as they are often referred to) have been known to attack ships at sea and even raid coastal settlements. They have domesticated several species of shark, which they employ as war steeds and burden beasts. Like sharks, it is said that the scent of blood drives these creatures into a frenzy.

There are those who claim that the Makara have built a city of sorts in the depths of the Sargasso Sea. Here, some say, the king of all the Makara dwells within a palace of stone worn smooth by the swirling currents. His coffers are said to overflow with treasures stolen from the hulks of a thousand sunken vessels. Though many scoff at these claims, many Triton clans are not so quick to dismiss these stories as flights of fancy.

ELYSIUM SEA



SCALE: 0 715
1 inch = 715 Miles
● = Settlement, Village
▲ = City
▬ = Road
··· = Trail, Caravan Route
ELYSIUM ISLANDS
HUAC
~ELYSIUM SEA~
NAZCA
OGALAPAGO
TORA ISLANDS
Roa
Rapa Nui
Matua
Tamaka
Peng
Lai
Orongo
Manacnac
Tomareta
Na Kua
Maninoa
MUNARK
KHITAI
Managuak
Manawak
LEMURIA
~ELYSIUM SEA~
MANUAN ISLANDS
Kuso
Nonamato
Manuk
Nan Matal
Tamakaia
Ogaramango
Melekuala
OGATAN ISLANDS
LEMURIA
Samal
Oko
Temuah
Tarawa
Yuku
Salawati
MU
Kiowa

THE ELYSIUM SEA (el-EE-zee-um)

The Elysium Sea lies between Tamoanchan and Lemuria. Dotted with small islands, the region is home to three distinct races and four ethnic groups. A dark-skinned race of humans, the Manuans, are a powerful force in these waters, as are the tall, green-skinned Tritons of the ocean shallows. Two distinct dwarven groups, one dark and of medium height, the other tall and light-skinned, are also common here. Other racial and ethnic types are also found, though they are few in number.

Once, three centuries ago, the only real distinction that could be made concerning political affiliations was a very basic one between sea-people and island-people. Each island was an entity unto itself, with little contact and no reason to unite. The rise of the warrior tribes of Manua, however, changed this. Many islands found it necessary to band together into loose confederations to resist Manuan domination. Today, there are fierce "nations" in these waters: Manua, Ogata, Tora, Elysium, and Munark. The warrior tribes of Manua rule the islands of Nonamato (no-na-MA-to), Manawak (ma-na-wak), Manuk (MA-nuk), Melekuala (me-le-KWA-la), and Samai (sa-MY). They have subjugated the peoples of these islands, and rule through military force.

The nation of Ogata was formed to resist the early expansionism of Manua. It includes the islands of Ogaramango (o-ga-ra-MAN-go), Temuah (te-MU-ah), and Salawati (sa-la-WA-te). Each is ruled independently by the indigenous tribe, but they have agreed to cooperate in the event of aggression, from the Manuans. Temuah and Salawati are the only islands in this ocean where land-based agriculture is practiced. The people are dark-skinned, and of medium height and build. They know nothing of metal-working, and use only stone implements.

Tora is a nation made up of people exiled from other realms who have banded together to cooperate against their common adversity. Each of the four islands was settled from a different area: Rapa Nui (RA-pa-NU-ee) from Ogaramango, Matui (ma-TU-ee) from Khitai, Orongo (o-RON-go) from Samal, and Tamaka (ta-MA-ka) from Salawati. They are each independently ruled, coming together only for the common defense. The island of Moto Nui (MO-to-nu-ee), part of the same island group, is said to be home to a struggling tribe of Zephyr whose numbers were drastically reduced by warfare and magical plagues over the last two centuries. Now numbering only a few dozen, they seek isolation, and are believed to shun contact with other races.

The Tritons of these waters rule the nation of Elysium, which consists of all the waters of the Elysium Sea and the sacred island of Elysium itself. These Tritons are nomadic, roaming the ocean in extended family groups or other bands, including merchants, adventurers, corsairs, or even ruffians and bandits. The Tritons tolerate others in their seas, but impose a death penalty against any who set foot upon the island of Elysium, which they consider a holy place.

Another major grouping of people are the sea-traveling nomad tribes, who hold no permanent territory. Though completely independent of each other, some are allied through various agreements for trade or defense purposes. They consider the islands of Manocnac (ma-NOK-nak), Temareta (te-ma-RA-ta), and Nakua (na-KU-a) as their home territories, though no tribe stays more than a season or so upon any one island each year. The three islands and all of the tribes are known by the collective name of Munark. They are a tall, light-skinned people of unknown origin, and are both primitive and highly superstitious.

Other islands of note include Kusa, Pulo, Oguamana, Tarawa, Maninoa. Jokaz, and Managuak. Kusa (KU-sa) is said to be haunted by an assortment of spirits, minor demons, and devils. No native of this region will dare set foot on the isle, despite the rumors that Kusa's jungles contain treasure buried here long ago by Sheban corsairs.

Pulo (PU-lo) is home to a tribe of huge, black-skinned Ogres, who hold a small human population in slavery. No one visits this island unless shipwrecked or ignorant of the situation. There are rumors of a great gold mine on the island, worked by the slaves and somehow accessible from the sea, but no one has ever substantiated these stories.

Oguamana (oh-gwa-MAHN-a) is a young island, formed by recent volcanic activity. The volcano is still erupting regularly, and is believed to be uninhabited.

Tarawa (ta-RA-wa) is an island about which little is known. Jagged rocks and perilous currents surround this isle, making it inaccessible by boat. Certain local tribesmen come here nevertheless, as the waters around the isle are said to be rich in pearl-bearing mollusks.

Maninoa (man-i-NO-a) is another island of mystery which is generally avoided. It is believed to be the home of an old and powerful wizard, who is said to have a number of fiendish, inhuman companions. Many wild rumors circulate about Maninoa and its strange inhabitants, but no one knows for certain what actually goes on on this island.

The isle of Jokaz (JO-kaz) is likewise a place steeped in legend, and is supposedly home to a fierce and intelligent dragon. Known far and wide as an oracle of great prescience, the dragon is of great age, tremendous size, and awesome power. Wizards and heroes have been known to go on quests to seek her advice and wisdom. As the dragon values its privacy — and treasure — it is said to have constructed ingenious, obstacles to protect the island from all but the most dedicated and skilled seekers.

Managuak (man-OG-wok) is an idyllic island paradise without a native population.

It is not far from the forbidden Triton island of Elysium, and there are many who believe it to be another Triton sacred place. It is, however, frequently visited by various sea-nomad tribes as a source of supplies and a haven from storms, and no grief has ever come to them.

The Elysium Sea teems with life, as do many of the islands themselves. Enriched by a climate made almost ideal by favorable water and air currents, the region is alive with plants and animals of every size and description. Most of the islands are rich in tropical vegetation, just as the seas abound in undersea plant life. There are few mammals on any of the islands, but birds, insects, amphibians and reptiles are all common. A few remnants of the great dinosaurs still survive on some of the larger islands, but these are rare. The most frequently used materials for tools, utensils, weapons, and other implements are shells, bamboo, and stone. The only metals which are worked by any of the Elysium Sea tribes are gold, silver, and copper; these are used only for jewelry and decorations. Some metal items do find their way to tribal chiefs and heroes in the islands as a result of trade with Jambu and Tamoanchan, but such items are rarities.

Because mammals are scarce, leather is a rare commodity. Durable goods are made either of reptile or shark hides (or, on some occasions, from human skins). By the same token, bows are a badge of the veteran warrior because the tendons used in bowstrings traditionally come from vanquished foes. The most common weaponry usually consists of shark-tooth clubs, conch (used as cesti), and barbed spears.

Most tribes of the region depend upon the sea for sustenance and support; only the tribe on Salawati uses land resources more than those of the ocean for food and other essentials.

UNCHARTED ISLANDS

There are many small islands dotting the Elysium Sea that are not shown on any of the maps in this booklet, and are not described here. Such islands may be quite ordinary, though a few may be encountered which are as strange and mysterious as any discussed here.

ELYSIUM

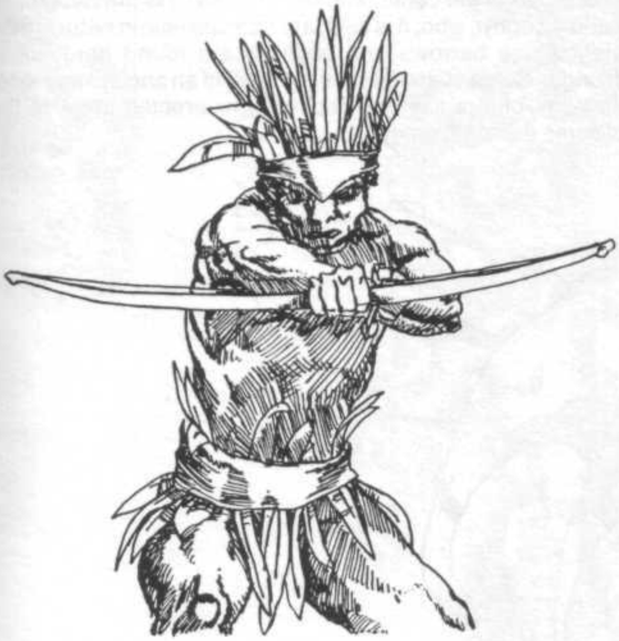
The aquatic Triton nation of Elysium claims all of the waters, the seabottoms below them, and the sacred island of Elysium itself, from Tamoanchan and Eria to the coasts of Lemuria and Khitai. None may tread upon the sacred isle, but the waters are made free to any who wish to travel them. These waters are home to the Triton people, who range far and wide upon their marvelous Hippocampus steeds.

Elysium, the nation, is made up of many small, interrelated tribes of Tritons, though some have given up the family-tribe groups to join other bands with particular occupations or goals. Tribes are nomadic in nature, following the migrations of fish or other schools of marine wildlife. Some, however, settle in coastal shallows to work small seafarms, while various groups range from one end of the ocean to the other, engaged in trade with the land-folk on the shores of the great sea. A very few are known to act as corsairs, raiding ships and coastal settlements without warning.

There is little in the way of overall unity to the "nation." Each tribe has its own chief, and follows customs and traditions which may vary considerably from one group to another. Once every year, the tribes assemble off the island of Elysium for a series of festivals. Inter-tribal problems are settled, marriages are solemnized, and trade is carried out between the tribes.

The sacred isle is vital to the cultural and ritual lives of all Tritons. It is the traditional spawning ground, and a favored place for burial. The island plays a major part in many traditional elements of the culture.

Though men may not set foot upon Elysium, the isle is not uninhabited. Nymphs, nature spirits, and magical animals and plants live here under the protection of the Tritons. The land is lush and rich, with abundant food and water, and hospitable weather all year long. It is also reputed to be rich in gems and precious stones.



MANUA (ma-NU-a)

The most coherent multi-island nation in the Elysium Sea, Manua is a land of short, dark-skinned sea-warriors. Originally from Nonamato and Kusa, the Manuans have conquered the human tribes on Nonamato, Manawak, Monuk, Melekuala, and Samal, and are believed to be interested in further expansion. The realm is not now at war with any nation, but is hostile towards both Ogata and Tora.

The Manuans are fierce fighters who prefer death to retreat or surrender. They wear crude but effective armor constructed of various materials, including bone lamellar, shark's hide, and the spiked skin of a particular species of blowfish native to this region. Shark-tooth clubs, barbed spears, and crude short bows are their favorite weapons. Excellent seamen, the Manuans employ outrigger canoes (up to 60 feet long) in their raids. They will attack other craft on sight in most cases, and have been known to engage in battle with the giant Kracken and Leviathans which roam the waters of the Elysium Sea.

The Manuan capitol of Nan Matal is the closest thing to an actual city in this region. It consists of over one hundred thatch huts of various sizes, all erected on sturdy bamboo stilts. Travel between huts is by canoe; each family owns at least one small craft used exclusively for this purpose. The Manuans worship a nameless sea god, whom they depict as a dragon of great size and power. Consequently, they will not harm or threaten any of the sea dragons found in their territorial waters, believing these creatures to be the representatives of their fearful patron deity. Their shamans wear elaborate dragon masks, and are said to be able to communicate with all types of dragons.

The island of Nonamato is rich and diverse. Lofty mountains separate the lush and fertile western region from an inhospitable eastern shore, and human tribes (fisher-gatherer extended-family groups) roam the land and the island's offshore waters. The only settlement of note is Nan Matal, the capitol of the realm.

The remaining Manuan islands of Manawak, Manuk, Melekuala, and Samal are also inhabited primarily by semi-nomadic human fisher-gatherers. Each island has an individual tribe with unique customs and traditions, but overall they are very similar. The Manuan overlords have stationed contingents of warriors on each to control the local population. There are a number of smaller islands within the waters claimed by Manua, but these are mostly uninhabited, isolated, and generally devoid of any redeeming qualities.

MUNARK (MU-nark)

Though Munark seems at first glance to be the least cohesive of all the nations of the Elysium Sea, in many respects it is far stronger than any of its neighbors. Where most of the tribes of these seas have banded into nations for temporary purposes of material self-interest, the great Tribe of Munark is a long-standing entity to which each of the individual tribes that comprise it give their loyalty.

Munark's culture is in many ways similar to that of the Elysium Tritons. Individual tribes of nomadic extended-family groups roam the waters of the ocean constantly. Each tribe is free to make its own way in the world, but all are bound by complex inter-tribal treaties to form the Great Tribe.

Each tribe of nomads is part of the Great Tribe. Each year, they gather at Manocnac to settle disputes and pass on information in council meetings held among all the chiefs of the individual tribes; the rest of the year, each chief leads his tribe as he sees fit. Though similar in appearance (dark-skinned, tall, broad of build), each tribe has its own distinct facial markings (paint, tattoo, etc.) and colorful mode of dress.

As a whole, Munark is neutral towards Manua, Ogata, and Tora. The nomads are looked upon as a source of trade goods and information, and so are generally free to stop at any island to hunt, gather supplies, make repairs, and otherwise make use of safe havens. Towards the Tritons, Munark holds a special regard, and their attitude is returned in kind. Tritons are treated as members of the Great Tribe, and nomads are favored in turn by the Triton nation.

Munark claims three islands as "homelands" for the Great Tribe: Manocnac, Tomareta, and Nakua. These islands serve as meeting places, safe havens, and bases, but the tribes actually travel the length and breadth of the Elysium Sea, and sometimes beyond, with no real home beyond the sea, the sky, and the rafts beneath their feet.

OGATA (o-GA-ta)

The "country" of Ogata is a loose alliance of three island tribes formed to counter possible aggression from Manua. The alliance is tenuous at best, and would quickly disintegrate in the absence of the Manuan threat.

The three main islands of Ogata are Ogaramango, Temuah, and Salawati, each inhabited by a culturally distinct human tribe. Ogata also includes a large number of small, uninhabited islands in and among these major isles, and lays claim to all the offshore waters as well. Elysium Tritons, however, use the shallows, and the deserted islands are frequently used as stopover points by sea-nomads and other travelers.

(The people of Ogaramango are the fiercest, most determined adversaries of the Manuans. Competitive in nature, this tribe stresses physical development and military prowess. A splinter group of the tribe, forced out of Ogaramango after a brief civil war, have settled the island of Rapa Nui.

A peaceful fisher-gatherer culture inhabits the island of Temuah. They are content with their island and their simple lives, and have a strong interest in natural lore and the magic of the physical world. A strong shamanistic undercurrent influences the whole of everyday life, from the most common everyday rituals to intricate aspects of philosophy and religion. They are primarily fishermen, but also have the beginnings of agriculture on their small island.

True agriculture, however, is mastered in the Elysium Sea only by the people of the Salawati tribe. They have established two small centers of population, Yuku (YU-ku) and Kiowa (kee-O-wa), and have cultivated much of the land between them.

They herd boars, as well as raising yams, banana, plantains, sugar cane, and breadfruit. The Kiowans are also adept in the crafts of the sea, including boatbuilding and navigation, and often travel as far as the coasts of Lemuria and Mu.

TORA (TOR-a)

This is a confederation of four islands, each autonomous and distinct in culture and background, but strongly united against any and all outside threats. The four islands are principally inhabited by exiled tribes of other regions who have made a new home for themselves. All are slightly xenophobic, distrusting the intentions of outsiders. Th melting pot of peoples lays claim to the islands and waters of Rap Nui, Matua, Tamaka, and Orongo. Each island is populated by a distinct cultural and ethnic group.

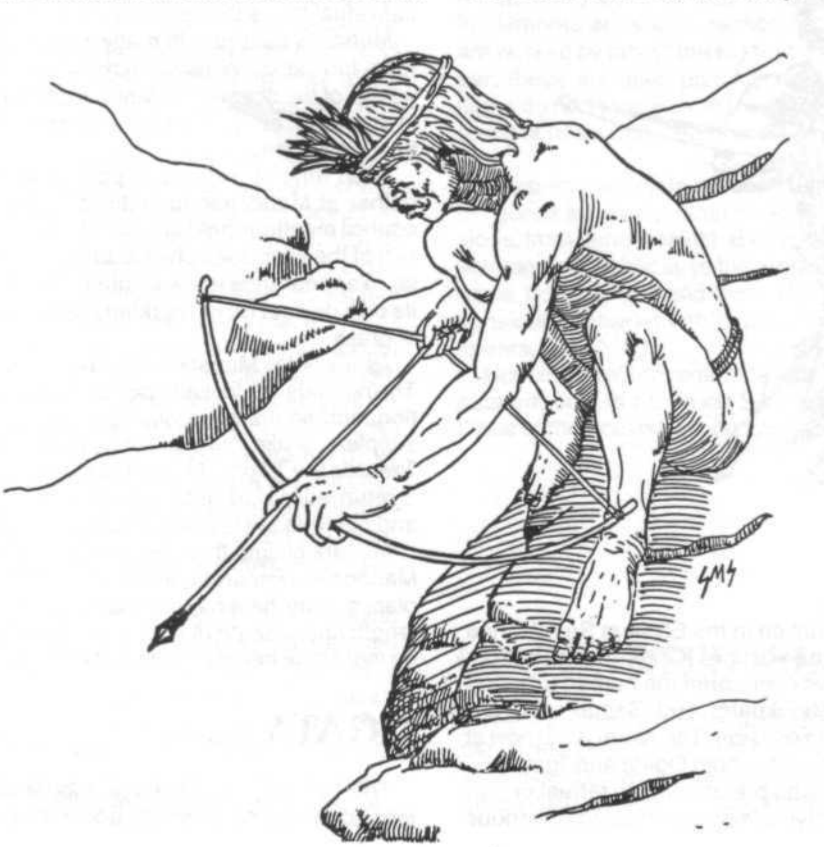
The people of Rapa Nui came originally from Ogaramango, but were forced into exile after losing an intra-tribal power struggle. They are proud warriors and outstanding athletes, just as their cousins in Ogato are. They have retained their fishing-gathering culture, and have prospered enough to establish a thriving settlement, called Roa (RO-a).

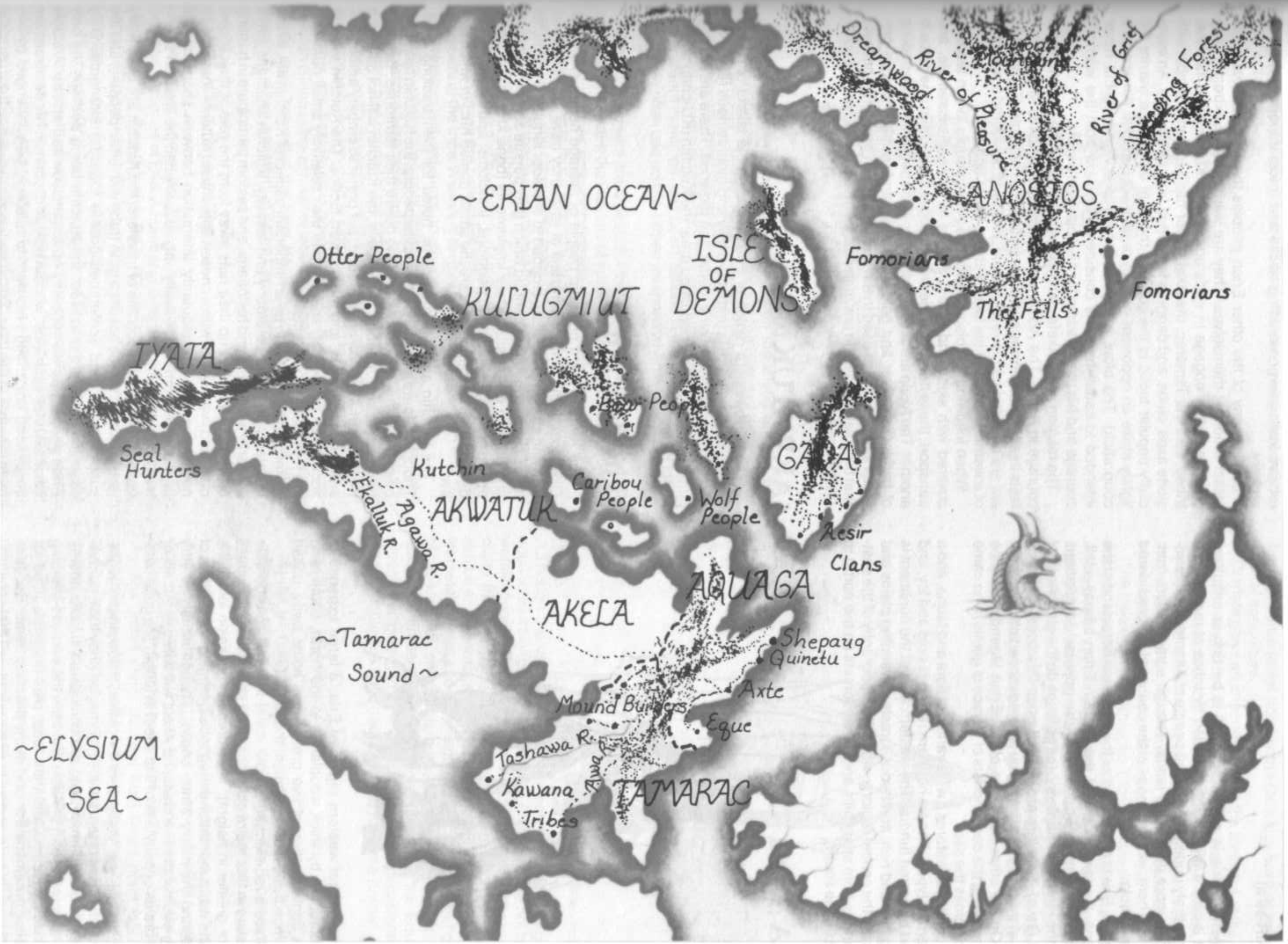
Matua's tribe came originally from the great city of Tang in Khitai. Originally, this group of exiles was a family (and their retainers) forced to leave Khitai after a failed political coup. On Matua, they built a small settlement called Peng Lai (peng-LIE). It is one of the few agricultural areas of the Elysium Sea, with goat herding a major part of their economy. Many of the old Khitan customs and traditions have been preserved here.

The island of Tamaka was settled by dissidents from Salawati, people who resisted the development of settled agriculture on their home island. Seeking to retain the semi-nomadic ways of their forefathers, they first attempted to fight the introduction of farms and fenced-in lands on Salawati, and were ejected. They fled to Tamaka, where they have put their ideas into regular practice. There are no communities or permanent settlements on the island, only thatched cottages constructed as their owners desire, and then abandoned as they fall into disrepair.

Orongo's people are similar in many ways to Tamaka in lifestyle, but come originally from the island of Samal after being forced out as the result of a great feud. Unusually adept at Elemental Magic, these people all have some skill in the art, and each generation sees a handful of truly powerful warlocks emerge.

Located virtually in the center of Tora is the island of Moto Nui, which is not a part of the confederation. The island is the refuge of a tribe of warlike Zephyr, who, it is said, are cannibalistic in nature. Several ancient stone barrows and obelisks are found here, all of unknown origin. Some claim they are the work of an ancient and long-lost civilization; others say the Zephyr have erected them at the behest of some demonic entity.




~ERIAN OCEAN~
Otter People
KULUGMIUT
ISLE OF DEMONS
Fomorians
Fomorians
The Fells
ANOSTOS
Dreamwood
River of Pleasure
River of Grief
Weeping Forest
TYATA
Seal Hunters
Kutchin
Ekalluk R.
Agawa R.
AKWATUK
Caribou People
Bear People
Wolf People
GAEA
Aesir Clans
AQUAGA
AKELA
~Tamarac Sound~
Shepaug
Quinetu
Axte
Egue
Mound Builders
Tashawa R.
Awa R.
Kawana
Tribes
TAMARAC
~ELYSIUM SEA~
SCALE:
0
1,150
1 inch = 1,150 Miles
● = Settlement, Village
▲ = City
▬ = Road
··· = Trail, Caravan Route

ERIA AND ANOSTOS

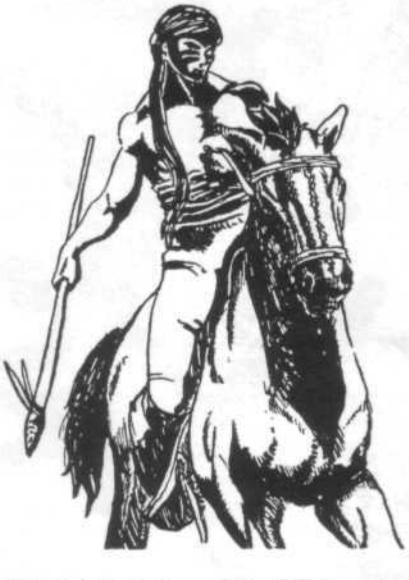
ERIA (AIR-ee-a)

The continent of Eria is a land believed to be rich in untapped resources. It is also a wild region, peopled by tribes of men whose ways are not entirely understood by the people of Atlantis, Mediterranea, and other, more developed lands. Though some traders from outside Eria visit here, existing maps of the continent are considered somewhat unreliable.

In old legends, Eria is mentioned as the ancestral homeland of the first Atlanteans. Certainly many of the eastern Erian tribes — tall, bronze-skinned, and majestic folk — fit the popular descriptions attributed to the First Age Atlanteans (as perhaps do the giant Aesir of the island of Gava). Scholars are divided upon this point, however, citing a lack of evidence depicting any truly advanced civilization in this region. On the other hand, the oldest Erian legends describe their people as being the descendants of "a race of giants, who came in ships from across the sea."

The Erian continent features a wide variety of flora and fauna, and a diversity of terrain types. The far northern region is cold and icy, and characterized by barren tundra. The western area of the continent is one of rolling hills and rich, coniferous forests. Sweeping plains and wooded hills dot the central regions, while the topography of the eastern sector ranges from stony hills and dense forests (in the north) to swamplands (in the south).

AKELA (a-KEY-la)



Akela is the central western region of Eria, a large expanse of grasslands bordered by thick woodlands to the north, south, and east. Here a confederation of five great tribes holds sway, united under a common symbol of veneration, the Eagle.

The Akela are a red-skinned people noted for their considerable stature (travelers in this realm claim that fully half of the adult males are six feet or greater in height). They dress in buckskin loincloths only during the warm months, wearing robes, leggings, and boots of bison hide during the heavy winter snows. Though hairstyles vary some among each of the five clans, no Akela will willingly cut his or her hair, and braids or ponytails of 3 to 4 feet in length are quite common.

A nomadic people, the Akela roam the plains, following the migrations of the vast herds of bison native to this region (they have domesticated a species of wild horse, and are considered superb riders). The bison is an integral part of Akela life; from the endless-seeming herds the Akela derive much of their food, plus materials used for clothing, shelter, ornamentation and many practical items. Because the hunting of bison is so important to Akela society, all male children receive instruction on reading tracks and (most importantly) horse archery.

Unlike many of the other Erian peoples,the Akela almost never bicker amongst themselves. They are warlike in the extreme, however, and often engage in raids against the Kutchin and Tamarac tribes. Like the Tamarac, the Akela favor hand-to-hand combat with stone axes, clubs, and daggers fashioned from bison horn. An especially popular tactic is the coup; in the heat of battle, a warrior will lightly strike an opponent with an ornate wooden club (known as a coup stick). The blow, always delivered to a vital area but never intended to cause harm, is considered to show both the warrior's courage and his utter disdain for his opponent's skills.

The religion of the Akela clans likewise stresses the importance of courage in battle. The Akela worship the Great Spirit, which manifests itself in many forms and is symbolized by the eagle. Eagle feathers are awarded for bravery in battle, and are considered a measure of a warrior's skill and his favor with the Great Spirit.

When following the bison herds, the Akela people live in teepees covered with skins and hides. Simple to erect, disassemble, and transport, these huts allow the clans to move swiftly from one place to another. The Akela are skilled craftsmen who specialize in the making of hammered silver and gold ornaments and jewelry. Various precious stones are also used in the making of such items. It is believed that the Akela obtain the raw materials for their jewelry from the northern hills region of nearby Akwatuk.

AKWATUK (AK-wa-took)

The northwestern region of Eria (including the island of Iyata) is known as Akwatuk. It is primarily a hilly and mountainous region covered in deep forests of pine, cedar, and redwood. There are two main tribes in this sparsely populated area: the Kutchin (KU-chin) and the Seal Hunters.

The Kutchin

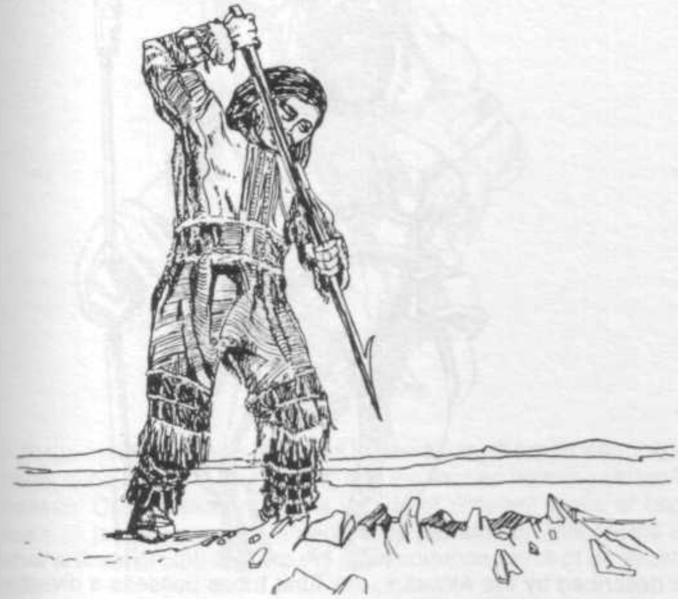
The Kutchin are a nomadic people of average height and build. Like most of the human denizens of Eria, they have reddish-brown skin and straight black hair, cropped to shoulder length. The Kutchin tribes subsist mainly on caribou which they pursue across the length and breadth of Akwatuk. Their implements (bone knives and bone-tipped spears) and clothing (leggings, loincloths, and cloaks) are all derived from the caribou, as are the small, domed huts in which they live.

The Kutchin are superb hunters, noted for their tracking skills. Though they are generally not a warlike people, the Kutchin have long been the enemies of the Akela, who desire their territories. Because they are not so numerous as the Akela, the Kutchin will not dare face their powerful foes on open ground, but prefer to employ ambushes, swift counter strikes, and other covert tactics. The Kutchin excel at such forms of combat, and, despite their relatively small numbers, are formidable opponents.

Religion seems not to be an important aspect of Kutchin life, which is notably devoid of ceremony and festivity. Kutchin shamans serve primarily as healers and historians, and seldom participate in hunting or warfare. Most set up their huts away from the rest of their tribesmen, and live along or with a chosen apprentice (Kutchin shamans do not take wives). Consequently, interaction between shamans and their people is rare, and usually only occurs when the shaman's services are needed.

According to the accounts of travelers, the Kutchin are essentially isolationists. They do not engage in trade with other peoples, and are suspicious of (and sometimes hostile towards) strangers. Only essential crafts are practiced, the Kutchin being perhaps the only Erian people who do not enjoy ornamentation and artistry. A single chieftain rules each tribe, without benefit of council. His decisions are considered law, though his right to rule may be challenged by any male member of the tribe. Such challenges may range from personal combat to a test of strength or skill, the victor being recognized as the tribe's chieftain.

The Seal Hunters



The Seal Hunters are found primarily on the island of Iyata and along the northern coasts of Akwatuk and the island of Iyata, where they live in large, partially underground sod dwellings. They are similar in appearance and stature to the Kutchin, though they dress in the skins of the animals which they trap and hunt (seal, walrus, and to a lesser extent mammoth and bear). Skilled in the use of harpoon and spear, they often use poison-tipped weapons when hunting very large game.

The Seal Hunters are a peaceful folk who love music, dance and art. They often paint the interiors of caves with scenes of their hunting exploits and other noteworthy deeds. Their festivals are said to be quite colorful, with much singing and playing of sealskin drums, walrus tusk flutes, and other exotic instruments.

The religion of the Seal Hunters is based upon the tribes' reverence for both the sea and the earth. Seal Hunter shamans often have seal, walrus, or other marine mammal spirits as power animals. Ceremonial observances are held at the equinoxes, and are attended by all members of the tribe. A week of revelry follows, during which time the Seal Hunters will undertake no other activities.

Though possessing only Stone Age technology, the Seal Hunters have a fairly advanced culture. Their villages are organized and efficiently run by a council of the eldest members of the tribe. They trade with their northern neighbors, the Kulugmiut, and use polished shells as currency. Though gold is said to be found in the northern hills of Akwatuk, the Seal Hunters have no use for it. The presence of Sasquatch (Erian lemures), saber tooth tiger, and other dangerous creatures does not deter the Seal Hunters from going there to hunt, however, when a scarcity of game forces them to do so.

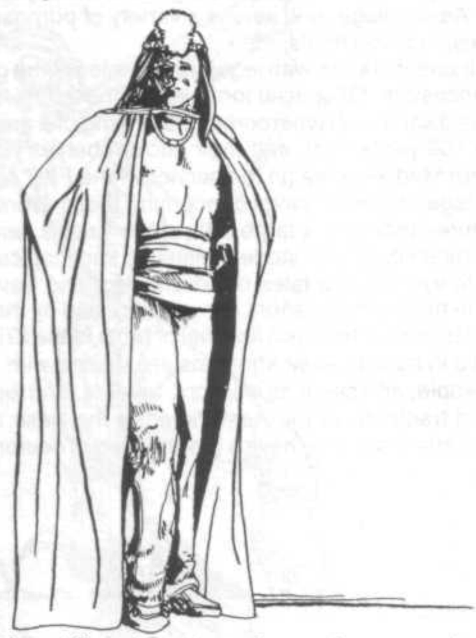
AQUAGA (ah-KWA-ga)

The region known as Aquaga occupies the northeastern and coastal territories of Eria. A number of different tribes live in this area, including the Axte (AX-tay), Eque (EK-way), Shepaug (SHEH-pog), and the Quinetu (kwih-NEH-tu). All are tall and stately of bearing, with coppery skin and straight black hair.

The tribes of the Aquaga region live a semi-nomadic lifestyle, moving from place to place according to the availability of game. Mastodon, deer and bear make up the bulk of the Aquagan peoples' diet, along with shellfish and a variety of salt and freshwater fish. Though most of the tribes supplement their diets by gathering fruits, nuts, and berries, some (most notably the Quinetu) have developed a limited form of agriculture.

Climate plays an important role in the lifestyles of the Aquagans as well. Those who live in the northern reaches dwell in long, thatched lodges for most of the year. The southeastern tribes, on the other hand, utilize smaller, skin-covered dwellings. Aquagan hunters, armed with flint-tipped arrows and spears, follow the dwindling mastodon herds on their sesonal migrations.

The religion of the Aquagan Tribes is essentially a mixture of shamanism and nature worship. Each family or clan has its own patron or totem (usually symbolized by an animal such as a deer, bear, or wolf), but only the forces of nature and "The Earth Mother" are revered as actual deities. Each village has at least one shaman, who plays an important part in the religious and social aspects of tribal life. In most Aquagan villages the shaman presides over a council of elders, and is truly accountable only to the clan's chieftain.



Though the various tribes have been known to engage in petty squabbles amongst themselves, the Aquagans are not known to be a warlike people. Traders who have visited these shores in recent times claim that the Quinetu and Shepaug are especially friendly, and exhibit an eagerness to barter their goods (skins, hides, and herbs) for metal articles and ornaments. Scouts, hunters, and guides, many of superior skill, can usually be obtained at minimal cost (1/2 standard rates for members of such professions). Only the Eque have ever proved belligerent to strangers, and only on occasions where their innate suspicions have been aroused for some reason.

GAVA (GA-va)

At the far northeastern stretches of Eria lies the island of Gava, called the "The Land of Giants" by the Erian Tribes of the mainland. Here dwell the last remnants of a race of giant beings known as the Aesir.

Smallest of the giant races, the Aesir are nonetheless huge by human standards. Most range from seven to eight feet tall, and weigh from 400 to 600 lbs. Pigmentation varies amongst the Aesir, but the majority have bronze-hued skin and brown hair. Several of the Aquaga Tribes claim descent from these giant folk, and certain scholars associate the Aesir with the legends of First Age Atlantis.

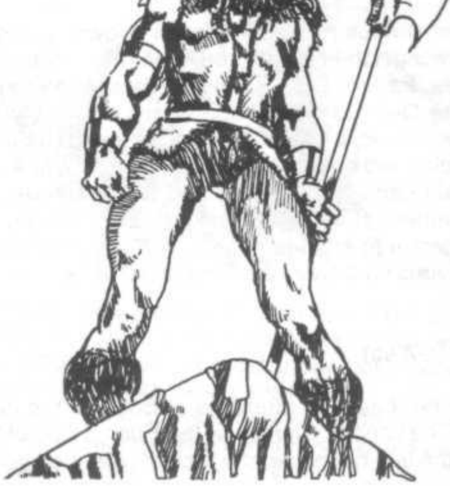
The Island of Gava is ringed by mountains and covered by ice and snow except along its western coast. Favorable winds and temperate currents have a warming effect, and it is here where most of the Aesir live. The waters in this region are well-stocked with fish (notably cod and halibut), and seals and walrus are also found here. Inland, musk oxen, wolves, elk, and caribou are most commonly found.

The Aesir are an aggressive and highly emotional folk, who revel in battle, song, and drink. They often sail the seas in great wooden ships, looking for a chance to meet their mortal foes, the Fomorians and the Jotun, in lusty combat. Though they apparently have no ambitions of conquest (and in fact will never attack weaker opponents), the Aesir seem to live solely for battle. For this reason, the once numerous Aesir population has dwindled steadily over the last few centuries, and appears to be slowly dying out.

Except for this concern, life in an Aesir settlement is said to be quite pleasant. Each family lives in a great lodge house constructed of wood and earth, and roofed with great strips of sod. Aesir furnishings are both sturdy and practical; wood-framed beds filled with sweet-smelling mosses, carved wooden bowls, stone tables and chairs, and so forth. Each village of 2 to 8 lodges is enclosed in an earthen work wall, which provides some protection from wild creatures and Fomorian raiding parties. A large meeting hall is usually found at the center of any Aesir village, and serves a variety of purposes (war councils, festivals, drinking bouts, etc.).

Aesir culture is rich with legends and tales of the glorious battles of their ancestors. Of special fondness to these folk is their friendship with the dwarves of Hyperborea, the sinking of a great Fomorian fleet (some 100 years ago), and their ancient battles with the goblins of northern Mediterranea (in the service of the First Age Atlanteans, or so the legend goes). Songs concerning these events and other epic adventures make up a large part of the Aesir's festivals. The Aesir love to hear songs and stories related to such topics, and are always eager to listen to the tales of adventurers and travelers from other lands; in most cases visitors are well received by these people.

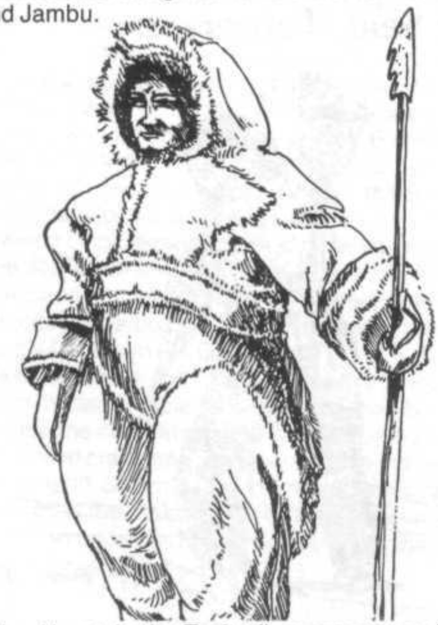
The religion of the Aesir, like that of most of the Erian tribes, is shamanistic in nature. Aesir shamans are treated with great respect by their people, and serve as warriors, healers, and keepers of the history and traditions of the Aesir race. As the Aesir are essentially a good-hearted folk, they have a great hatred of necromancy and black magic.



KULUGMIUT (kuh-LOOG-me-yute)

The northern islands and coastal regions of Eria comprise the region known as Kulugmiut. The vast, snowy expanses of this region are practically devoid of vegetation, and are most hostile to travelers. Though the early Atlanteans are said to have explored Kulugmiut, an even remotely reliable map of these territories probably does not exist.

According to the Akwatuk, this northern realm is inhabited by many small to medium sized tribes of men. (The Akwatuk call them the Tunit; TU-nit.) They are said to be unlike most of the Erian peoples, being somewhat short of stature, heavily built, and of sallow complexion. Scholars believe the Tunit peoples migrated across the now sunken landbridges which are thought to have once connected the continents of Eria and Jambu.



As described by the Akwatuk, the Tunit tribes possess a diverse and unique culture. Each tribe has its own patron spirit animal, after which the clans take their names. Known Tunit tribes include The Bear People, The Otters, The Wolf People, and The Caribou People. Despite a lack of evidence, rumors of cannibalistic Tunit tribes dwelling far to the north continue to persist among the Akwatuk.

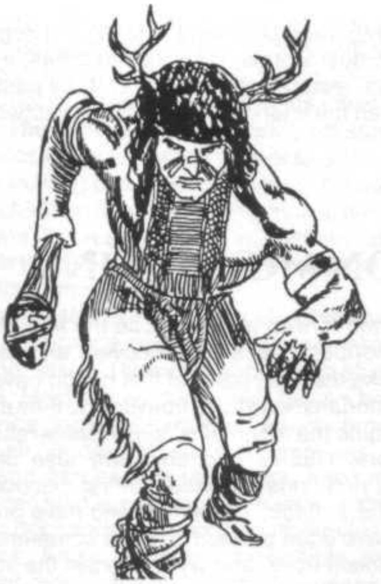
The Tunit tribes are said to be craftsmen of the first order, fashioning many useful articles from the limited resources available in this barren region. Barbed harpoons and arrows are carved from bits of ivory, as are sled runners (the Tunit have domesticated a wolflike species of canines which are used to draw their sleds) and a type of "hobnailed" ice shoe used to scale glaciers. Waterproof clothing and kayaks are fashioned from walrus gut and hides. Tunit dwellings are quite unique, as they are fashioned from blocks of hard-packed snow. These dome-shaped snow houses, some large enough to hold as many as fifty people, are equipped with "skylight" panes of stretched walrus gut. Though the Tunit people eat only raw meat, they know how to use fire, and have even developed a crude type of seal oil lamp. These lamps, consisting of a saucer of seal oil and a wick of twisted moss fibers, are used primarily to heat the Tunit's snow lodges.

The religion of the Tunit tribes is shamanistic and animistic; the Tunit believe that all things possess a living spirit. They are very superstitious, and many seemingly harmless activities may be considered taboo, depending on a variety of circumstances. Tunit shamans play an important role in the lives of the rest of the people, and are considered the only individuals capable of dispelling the many ill omens and signs which the Tunit fear so greatly. Both a tribe's shamans and its warriors dress in costumes made from the skins, claws, and teeth of the clan's patron spirit animal. Though Tunit shamans may be of either sex, female shamans are generally considered more effective than their male counterparts. Intricately carved walrus tusks serve as scrolls and magical tomes (as well as tribal histories), and are highly prized by traders from other countries.

If the Akwatuk are to be believed, the majority of the Tunit tribes are not overtly hostile to outsiders. They do feud amongst themselves, however, and must be considered less than reliable due to the highly superstitious and suspicious nature of most of the clans.

TAMARAC (TAM-er-ak)

This central eastern region of Eria is inhabited by a group of tribes known as the Mound Builders. They are of average height, and are characterized by their reddish-brown skin and straight, black hair.



Both the males and females dress in deerskins, the men wearing leggings, loincloths and moccasins, and the women wearing caftan-like dresses. Copper jewelry and a variety of different types of beads (worn as jewelry or sewn in decorative patterns on moccasins and other articles of clothing) are the most common forms of ornamentation.

The Tamarac Mound Builders construct tiered earthern ceremonial platforms, dome-shaped houses, and large burial mounds using only the crudest hand tools. It is the custom of these people to bury their dead, with all their earthly possessions, in such mounds. This is believed to ensure the comfort and happiness of the spirits of their departed kinfolk in the next life. To further honor the spirits of dead, sacrifices of food and drink are offered up once each year. The mounds themselves are considered sacred, and are tended to by the tribes' shamans. Tampering with these edifices in any way is considered a sacrilege punishable in most cases by death.

A highly organized people, the Tamarac tribes have learned to cultivate certain edible plants, and are knowledgeable in the ways of herb lore. The women are skilled at weaving and pottery, and create goods of fine quality. Though they possess little talent for mining or metalurgy, the Mound Builders are known to make extensive use of copper, primarily for armbands, bracelets, and similar items. Large quantities of the red metal can be found throughout the hills bordering this region, much of it in pure and readily useable form.

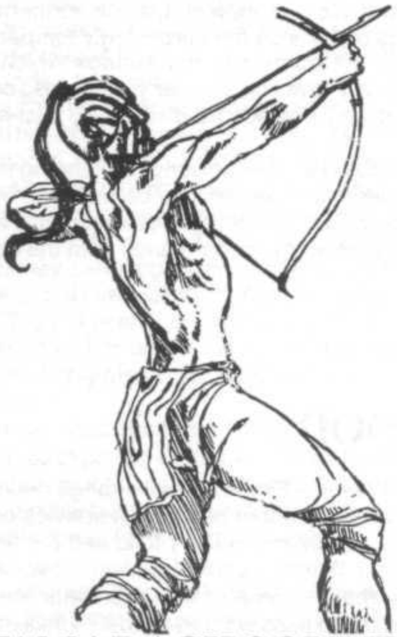
The warriors of the Tamarac tribes are readily recognizable by their elaborate headdresses, which are made of deer hide topped by a pair of sharpened antlers. Prior to battle, the warriors paint their faces and torsos with red and white pigments, giving them a wild and somewhat fearsome appearance. Stone axes and war clubs are the most common weapons, though spears and short bows are also employed; generally speaking, the Tamarac consider the short bow better suited to the hunting of game, and prefer hand-to-hand combat when given a choice. Their enemies are the Akela and the Kawanna.

The Kawanna (ka-WA-na)

The southeastern region of Tamarac is home to several tribes of hunter gatherers, known collectively as the Kawanna. These people live in villages of thatched huts, most often enclosed by high wooden walls. In addition to the game and edible plants which they derive from the surrounding forest lands, the Kawanna also fish the waters which lie to south, and traverse the Awa (AH-wa) River in canoes made of bark. The Kawanna are a reclusive people who are said not to be fond of trespassers into their territories. Despite this, Kawanna jewelry of quartz, mica, and seashells (from the coastal waters) is found in many places throughout Eria, a fact which suggests that trade with other tribes occurs from time to time.

Though similar in many respects to the Tamarac peoples, the Kawanna consider themselves superior to their northern neighbors. Their warriors wear necklaces of bear claws, and paint their faces with black and white pigments. All Kawanna males shave their heads, preserving only a small lock of hair at the center of the scalp. This they never cut, but decorate with bone ornaments, tufts of deer hair, and feathers. The Kawanna take scalps in battle, and such scalp locks are especially prized as trophies.

In battle, the Kawanna employ essentially the same weaponry as the Tamarac. They have feuded with the Mound Builders for untold generations, and occasionally launch raids against their villages. Their shamans go with them into battle, and use their potent magics to give courage to the Kawanna and strike fear into the hearts of their foes.



THE TAMARACK SOUND (TAM-ar-ak)

The Tamarack Sound is a shallow body of water separating the northern peninsula of Tamoanchan from the Erian continent. The isle of Tamawa and a few small rockpiles off Iyata and Akwatuk are the only bits of land in the Sound. Beneath the water, the bottom of the Sound has a fairly uniform depth, averaging around 100 feet; it slants downward gradually as it meets the Elysium Sea in the northwest. At its other extremity, in the southwest, an undersea cliff drops into the deeper waters of the Ocaraba Channel, which leads into the Antillan Channel and the Atlantean Ocean.

The Tamarack Sound is a warm body of water, save in the north around Iyata and Akwatuk. There are many exotic and colorful fish in these waters, and numerous species of turtles. Awashata (a-wa-SHA-ta) Bay on the Erian coast is a particularly rich area for marine wildlife. The central area is home to giant sea snakes, who live in tangled masses of undersea vegetation, submerged hillocks which are frequently the lairs of giant snapping turtles. From time to time, shark-riding Makara out of the Sargasso Sea and the Antillan Channel travel into this region, but such visits are infrequent. Even more infrequent are Tritons, whether from Antilla or the Elysium Sea. The dangers of these waters generally close them to travel by either group, though from time to time, the Tritons do use the Sound to keep up a tenuous contact between the two peoples.

As for humans, only the Erians of Tamarack regularly ply the waters of the Sound. They stay primarily in Awashta Bay, using small craft for fishing and coastal travel. Mostly they make use of bark canoes, generally averaging eight feet in length, but sometimes twenty feet long or larger. Every so often the people of Kulugmiut venture south into the Sound out of their chilly Erian Ocean waters, but such visits are said to be quite rare.

ANOSTOS (uh-NOS-tos)

To the west of the Sea of Dread lies Anostos, the mysterious *Land Of No Return*. Veiled in perpetual mist, the jagged coastline of Anos*tos can present difficulties to even the most experienced navigators.* Many a ship has gone down in these waters, where swirling currents and partially submerged rocks are an ever-present hazard. In some places, precipitous cliffs rise up from the churning seas, forming a natural barrier against all but the most determined landing parties. In others, twisting inlets and narrow, stone defiles must be navigated before ships can put ashore.

Though covered with ice and snow across the northern territories, the southern regions of Anostos are surprisingly temperate. This is due in large part to the numerous hot springs which are found throughout these parts. Prevailing southerly winds also contribute to this phenomenon, giving Anostos its distinctive, mist-enshrouded appearance.

The terrain of Anostos is similarly distinctive, ranging from the ravaged wastes of the fells to the twin woodlands known as the Weeping forest and Dreamwood. To the north, the Iron mountains form a natural barrier separating this warmer southlands from the icy expanses of the polar regions.

DREAMWOOD

To the east of The Weeping Forest lies the strange realm known as Dreamwood. Here dwell a number of different species of woodland beings: lustful satyrs, mischievious faery-folk, and the myriad numphs of wood and stream. Warlike bands of *arcitenus* (two-headed centaurs) and *malataur* (half man/half ram) also roam these woods, allowing only Fomorians to pass without incident.Unlike the gloomy surroundings of the Weeping Forest, Dreamwood is a place of startling beauty. Fields of poppy, meadow saffron, and red heather show their bright colors at every clearing, filling the air with their fragrant scents. Here also are found all manner of flowering and fruit-bearing trees, untended save for the gentle visitations of butterflies, songbirds, and sprites.

Flowing through the midst of this splendid realm is the River of Pleasure, whose crystal waters are said to be as intoxicating as the most potent wine. When taken to excess (6 pints or more) the waters of the River of Pleasure reputedly cause a slumber filled with the most wonderous and sometimes (50%) divinatory dreams. Nearly all of the inhabitants of Dreamwood partake of these waters, and so are most often encountered in various states of inebriation. The Fomorians in particular make good use of these waters, flavoring them with certain fruits, berries, and (occasionally) narcotic herbs.

THE FELLS

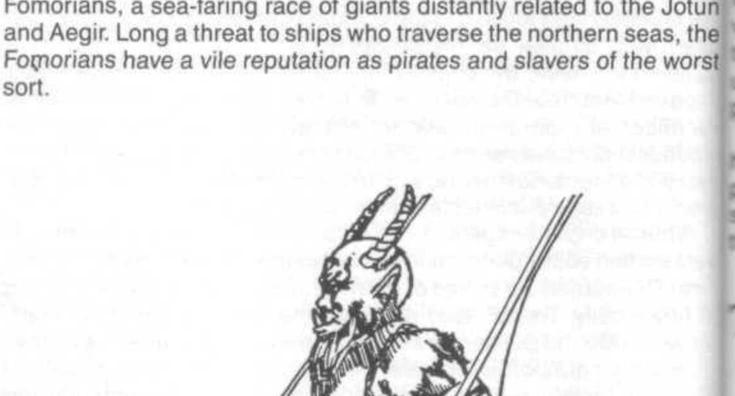
Beyond the mist-enshrouded coastline, the land rises and falls in great convolutions of earth and stone. Known as The Fells, this barren wasteland was once an extension of Anostos' two great woodlands: the Weeping forest and Dreamwood. Generations of Fomorian shipbuilders have long since defoliated this once verdant area in order to acquire timber for their massive, ocean-going vessels. As a result, the fells are now devoid of vegetation, and much of this region has been scarred by the erosive effects of wind and rain. A reddish cloud of dust and fine soil hangs over the fells which, while not harmful, often causes visibility to be limited to 50-100 feet.

Though occasionally frequented by predatory animals, most of the denizens of Anostos tend to avoid this barren stretch of land. Adventurers will find that travel over land is slow, and sometimes dangerous; rock slides, dust storms, undermined areas, and deep ravines are fairly common features of this area. Only by passing through the fells, however, can the interior of Anostos be reached.

THE IRON MOUNTAINS

North of the twin forests of Anostos lie the Iron Mountains, a vast range of snow-topped peaks which covers an area of over 1,000 square miles. Like the fells, parts of this region have suffered at the hands of the Fomorians, who have from time to time engaged in large-scale efforts to mine the mountains' appreciable reserves of tin, copper and iron ore. Rubies and onyx are also present in these mountains, with rich finds reportedly being discovered quite close (10-40 feet) to the surface. Those few who have prospected in this dismal region have often profited, though sometimes at great cost; cave trolls, mountain trolls, and wyrrms prowl the subterranean levels, and violent wind and snow storms are fairly common. The Iron Mountains mountains are also home to several tribes of Nethermen (goblin/human crossbreeds). All but one or two of these warlike bands are reputed to be hostile to humans, and even the Fomorians prefer to give them a wide berth. As the Nether tribes generally restrict their activities to the mountains, they are seldom encountered in the forests or along the coastal areas.

The most dominant species on the continent of Anostos are the Fomorians, a sea-faring race of giants distantly related to the Jotun and Aegir. Long a threat to ships who traverse the northern seas, the *Fomorians have a vile reputation as pirates and slavers of the worst* sort.



The twisting inlets and fjords of Anostos' jagged coastline are home to the Fomorians, who live in walled villages of crudely worked stone. Several thousand Fomorians are believed to live on the continent, though they are by no means a unified force. Over 100 different clans are said to exist, each numbering from 30-300 individuals. Squabbling amongst the clans is common, and often leads to violence. Full-scale wars between clans are, however, extremely rare.

Life within a Fomorian village is both brutal and monotonous. Females and children (who make up approximately 2/3 of any clan) perform all labor, occasionally aided by such slaves as the clan has managed to acquire. Those who are too old or feeble to work are either slain out of hand or banished to the fells. When not at sea, the adult males spend much of their time lolling about, arguing over stolen booty, or drinking great quantities of the intoxicating beverage known as *fomor*. The more aggressive males will sometimes venture forth into the interior, either to hunt for food or to gather the ingredients necessary to the making of their potent brews. If a clan has captured many slaves, its chieftain may elect to dispatch a mining expedition to the Iron Mountains. Such expeditions will usually consist of at least twenty individuals (one Fomorian guard for every four slave laborers), and may last as long as six months.

The primary occupation of Fomorian males, however, is piracy. The ships used for this purpose are appropriately massive in size (up to 200 feet long), and can hold twice as much cargo as an average large merchant vessel. Most are centuries old, having been constructed from the long-since-depleted hardwood forests (now known as the Fells). Despite their ponderous bulk, the Fomorians' vessels are surprisingly swift, and can easily outdistance most merchant ships. Each single-masted ship is equipped with oars, a single heavy catapult, an iron prow (for ramming), and grappling poles. Built to Fomorian specifications, these ships are impossible for non-giants to handle. Maximum crew capacity is sixty Fomorians, or about three times as many human-sized individuals. Repeated applications of certain herb extracts have rendered the hulls and masts of Fomorian ships particularly resistant to fire (flames of any sort do only 1/2 damage).

In battle, the Fomorians are both fierce and tenacious. They wll relentlessly pursue any but the most insignificant-seeming craft. Fomorians (having the same abilities as corsairs) wll waylay victims whenever possible, in order that they may be taken alive. Able-bodied victims are kept as slaves; less-promising physical specimens (and those individuals who refuse to cooperate with their new masters) are usually tortured to death, boiled in a large cauldron and eaten, or disposed of in some similarly cruel fashion.

Though related to the giant Aesir and Jotun races, the Fomorians have no love for either of these folk. Both have been enemies in the past; the Aesir having frustrated Fomorian invasions on many occasions, and the Jotun having themselves failed several times to raid the coast of Anostos.

THE WEEPING FOREST

The Weeping Forest is a bleak area populated primarily by white wolves (who howl mournfully whenever the moon is full), crows, and such strange creatures as *boggarts, gwylion* and *arcitenus.* A variety of strange and ancient trees grow here, most having the forlorn and drooping appearance characteristic of weeping willows. Many different species of rare herbs and plants grow amidst the tangled underbrush, certain of which are said to be useful to alchemists and thaumaturges.

Through this woodland realm flows the River of Grief, whose hazy blue waters are said to be magical in nature. According to legend, the waters of the River of Grief are actually the tears of the forgotten goddess Tua, who wept upon learning that she was no longer revered by men. While these waters are deemed safe to drink, the blue-grey mists which sometimes rise from the river can cause those who inhale them to become stricken with sorrow (save us CON or experience severe depression for 2-24 hours). Fortunately for travelers in this strange land, the mists are rarely seen except during the evening hours. The giant Fomorians have an unnatural fear of these mists, and so will never venture into The Weeping Forest by night.

THE ISLE OF DEMONS

Off the western coast of Anostos lies the dread domain known as the Isle of Demons. Here, if one can believe the tales of frightened sailors, the very waters about the island boil and seethe as if churned by unseen forces. It is said that in the evening hours terrible, inhuman cries can be heard issuing forth from the isle, sometimes from as far away as 12 miles.

Though there are many mysteries connected with the Isle of Demons, the denizens of this shadowy realm are by no means unknown, especially to those who study the arcane arts. They are the Hantu, an evil race of beings often referred to as "earth-bound demons". The estimable First Age sorcerer, Korak, refers to both the Hantu and the Isle of Demons in his classic: **GUIDE TO THE LOWER PLANES**, as follows:

"The Hantu (classified as "999:black" by the daemonologist, Ahriman) are hideous and brutish creatures of unknown origin. Unlike most daemons, Hantu are not characterized by any single set of physical attributes; rather, they may possess any number of repulsive characteristics, including cloven feet, claws, forked tongues, bat-like wings, shaggy hides, scales, multiple sets of arms or legs, and so forth. Ahriman claims that as many as twelve different species exist, which may, indeed, be true.

On the earthly plane, Hantu are found in numbers only upon the aptly named Isle of Daemons, which lies to the west of Anostos. Here, as in other places, the Hantu take such refuge as they can in swamps, tangled forests, and mountainous regions. They are inactive by day, but come forth each night to hunt for food.

Because Hantu do not hail from the traditional home planes of demonkind, they cannot be summoned by spells of any sort. Their appearance on the material plane is explained by the Hantu's propensity for spotting magical gates and inter-planar rifts, and entering of their own accord. For some reason, Hantu who in this way gain access to the earthly plane often find that they are unable to return to their own world."

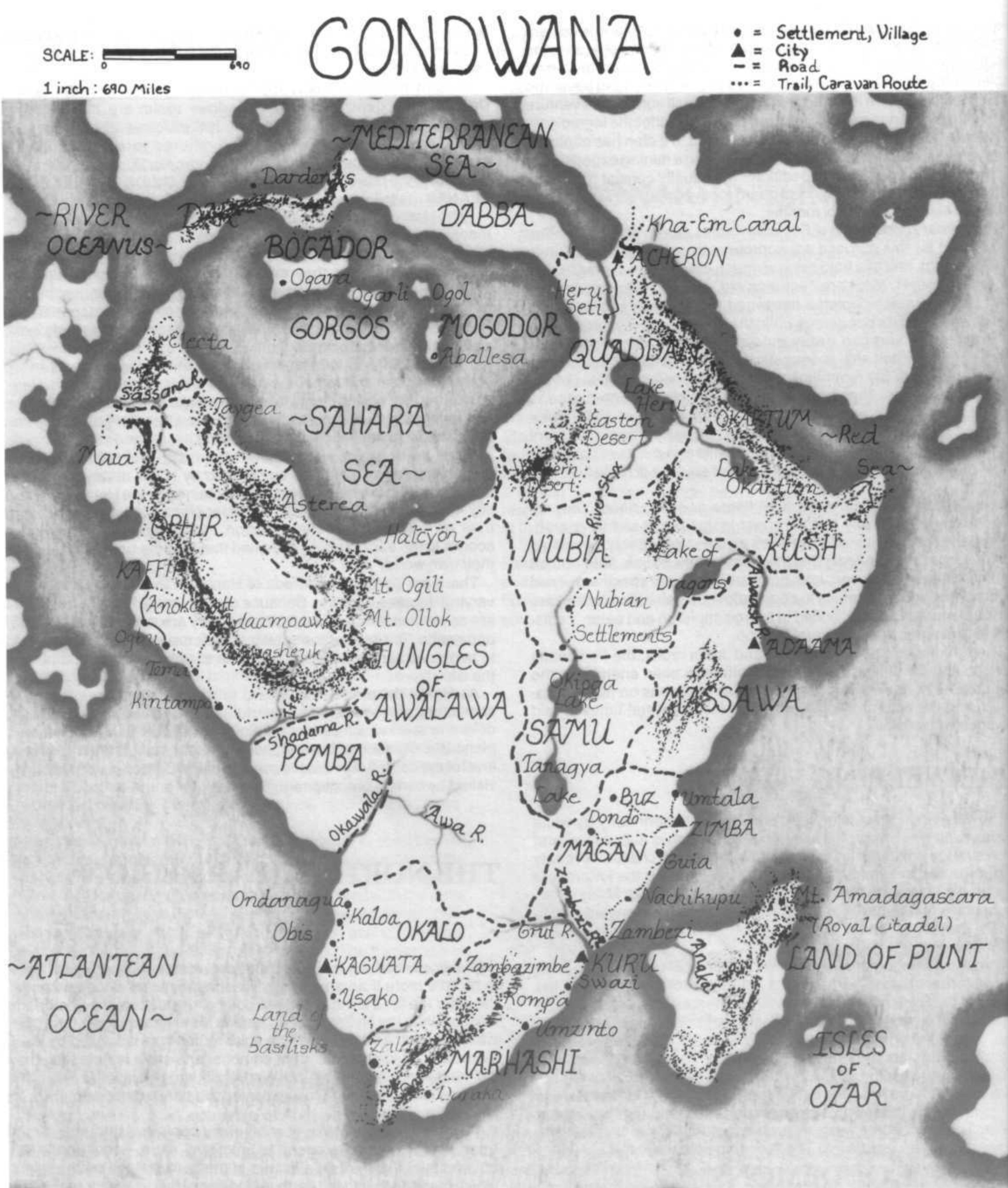
There are perhaps hundreds of Hantu on the Isle of Demons, of varying degrees of power. Because of their innate ferocity, the Hantu are as much a threat to each other as they are to the island's animal population. Terrible battles between these creatures are, in fact, said to be the explanation for the fearsome shrieks which emanate from the isle.

As Hantu despise being bound to the material plane, they will sometimes agree to serve a powerful spell caster in exchange for any device or spell which can be employed to return them to their home plane (the duration of such a pact will rarely exceed one month per level of the caster). For this reason, the Isle of Demons is occasionally visited by certain practitioners of magic.

THE NORTH POLAR REGIONS

Practically nothing is known of this desolate area, which is believed to be little more than an endless-seeming expanse of ice and snow. Whether the area is inhabited is a point of conjecture; the Fomorians say no, while the Nethermen of the Iron Mountains believe the opposite to be true. As they see it, the polar regions are inhabited by monsters such as ice golems, frost demons, and snow lemures (as they call Yeti). Understandably, the Netherfolk are reluctant to enter this territory, and in fact tend to avoid even the northern faces of the Iron Mountains.

The Aesir of Gava have yet another conception of this area, based upon a rather obscure legend of unknown origin. According to this colorful tale, there exists a fissure at the center of the polar regions which leads deep into the earth. At the end of this fissure or tunnel can be found an entire other world, which, by its description, might resemble the verdant jungles of Lemuria. This "hollow earth" legend, while popular amongst the Aesir, is viewed with a good deal of skepticism by most other peoples.


GONDWANA
SCALE: 0 690
1 inch : 690 Miles
● = Settlement, Village
▲ = City
— = Road
··· = Trail, Caravan Route
~MEDITERRANEAN SEA~
Dardenus
~RIVER OCEANUS~
DABBA
BOGADOR
Ogara
Ogarli
Ogol
GORGOS
MOGODOR
Aballesa
Electa
Sassara R.
Taygea
~SAHARA SEA~
Maia
Asterea
OPHIR
Halcyon
KAFFIR
Anokarutt
Adaamoawa
Ogbu
Tama
Kintampo
Mt. Ogili
Mt. Ollok
JUNGLES OF AWALAWA
Shadama R.
PEMBA
Okawala R.
Awa R.
Kha-Em Canal
ACHERON
Heru-Seti
QUADDAN
Lake Heru
Eastern Desert
Western Desert
River Styx
OKARTUM
~Red Sea~
Lake Okartum
NUBIA
Lake of Dragons
KUSH
Awash R.
Nubian Settlements
ADAAMA
Okipga Lake
MASSAWA
SAMU
Tanagya Lake
Buz
Umtala
Dondo
ZIMBA
MAGAN
Guia
Nachikupu
Mt. Amadagascara (Royal Citadel)
Zambezi R.
Zambezi
Grut R.
Ondanagua
Kaloa
OKALO
Obis
KAGUATA
Zambazimbe
KURU
Swazi
Usako
Rompa
Land of the Basilisks
Zali
Umzinto
MARHASHI
Durahn
Anaka
LAND OF PUNT
ISLES OF OZAR
~ATLANTEAN OCEAN~
EMPI
~FORGOTTEN SEA~

GONDWANA (gon-DWA-na)

The continent of Gondwana has been referred to in the writings of historians and geographers as *The Dark Continent*. The name is usually said to derive from the wild, untamed lands of the interior, where impenetrable jungles and soaring mountains hide sights never seen by man.

Gondwana's wild interior, though, is but one aspect of the Dark Continent. There are several advanced civilizations on Gondwana's coasts, and a wide diversity of cultures and peoples.

In terms of geography, Gondwana can generally be divided into four regions. Each displays specific characteristics of terrain, climate, wildlife, and habitability. Further, each offers particular dangers and problems of its own to be overcome.

The Interior is a tropical region, wild and uncultivated, dominated by vast jungles. "Interior" is a loose term, for the jungle extends in places to the western coasts of the continent, particularly along the great river basins. Few humans live in many of these regions, which are populated with wild beasts and other predators.

In the north, the great circle of the Sahara Sea and the lands around it form the second region of the continent. The Saharan lands are tropical or subtropical, blessed with warm, regular temperatures and richly abundant flora and fauna. The island of Hesperia, with its lush, garden-like woodlands, is the best-known of the Saharan lands, and is very much typical of the region as a whole.

The eastern coasts are a distinct region, dominated by savannah rather than jungle. Wildlife is abundant, but on a completely different pattern than the interior jungles or the pastoral north. The Coast blends almost imperceptibly with the fourth region, the Southlands; these lands are cooler, drier, and more rugged, and support several large and sophisticated civilizations.

Gondwana's wide range of climates and terrain types supports many and varied forms of life. From the subtropics of the north through jungles and wide savannah, plants and animals of countless types flourish. In the heart of Gondwana, a few of the great reptiles and giant mammals left from the dawn of time linger on, side by side with more modern species — elephants and rhinoceri, lions, gorillas and wildebeast, unicorns and dragons, among a host of others.

The interior and the southlands are both famed for precious metals of all kinds.

Gold and diamonds are especially common in these lands. The eastern shores are fairly poor in diverse mineral resources, but support an animal-based economy through vast tracts of grazing lands.

The Dark Continent also supports a wide variety of intelligent inhabitants. Men are the most common: human tribes of all ethnic and racial subtypes are present, from the dark-skinned dwellers of the east and south to the lighter peoples of the north, with many subdivisions and shadings between common throughout Gondwana.

Though elves are scarce, some are reputedly found on the northern peninsular stretch of Dabba. Even in these regions they are few in number. On the island of Punt, the dwarf population is a large one. The beast-men of Gondwana (the Andaman tribes) are quite common in the interior, though less so in civilized territories.

Goblins of many types may be found throughout the continent. Sidhe — Sprites, Bakru, and others — are also common; so are Satyrs, a variety of the so-called "intelligent beasts," and many sinister night spirits and fell creatures. A number of Earth-bound demons and devils make their homes in the interior, too, preferring the wild jungles and lonely mountain peaks to other, more settled terrain.

AWALAWA (a-wa-LA-wa)

The region known as Awalawa has become synonymous, for most, with the interior of Gondwana. It is a land of jungle, often impenetrable; human tribes do not live here, and few men dare venture into the land. Within these primeval jungles lurk dinosaurs, huge mammals, and strange avians which are extinct elsewhere in the world.

ble; human tribes do not live here, and few men dare venture into the land. Within these primeval jungles lurk dinosaurs, huge mammals, and strange avians which are extinct elsewhere in the world.

The boundaries of Awalawa are indistinct and uncertain. The borders as shown on maps are the general boundary lines which mark the zones in which humans live off from the actual jungle fastness. Even within the regions bordering on Awalawa, the terrors of the jungle remain real and potent, and few inhabitants of such areas stray far from their villages or fields.

The name Awalawa is derived from a prayer to the goddess Hawwa, one of the Old Gods, beseeching protection from the dark powers of the jungle. Natives forced for any reason to venture into the jungles can be heard to utter a whispering, chanting repetition of the word as a plea to the Goddess. Sometimes those who scorn the Old Gods may still be heard chanting the word when confronted with the daunting reality of Gondwana's jungle interior.

A few humans do live within Awalawa, but for the most part these are exiles, bandits, hermits, or others who for one reason or another choose to face the perils of the region over the security of outside societies. Survival in Awalawa is hard, and only the strong, the swift, or the intelligent can survive the land's challenges.

Even so, the treasures that lie within are a powerful lure to those who have the courage to tread those hazardous trails. It is said, for instance, that the flanks of the twin mountains Ogili and Ollok shimmer wondrously with half-buried diamonds. These and other wonders have long drawn adventurers searching for treasure hoards deep into the unforgiving jungles. To some, Hawwa has granted her protection. Others remain there yet, bleached bones beneath a merciless sun: a warning to those who would follow in their footsteps.

DABBA (DAB-ba)

Dabba is a long, narrow peninsula which runs roughly east to west, forming the northern extremity of Gondwana. To the east, it is joined to the mainland through Qaddan; the country of Dar continues the peninsula to the west. The Mediterranean Sea lies to the north, and the Saharan Sea to the south. The region is arid and rocky, and supports only a comparatively small and scattered populace, known scornfully to outsiders as: *The Lotus-Eaters*.

The inhabitants of Dabba have light brown skins, Mediterranean features, and kinky brown hair, much like their neighbors in Dar. They tend to be ill-groomed and malnourished, wearing few clothes at best. Most striking of all, however, are their perpetual expressions of euphoria and mildless docility, the result of longstanding addiction to a narcotic powder made from lotus leaves.

The Cult of the Lotus is very strong in Dabba, and the vast majority of the inhabitants follow this ancient worship. All aspects of life are intricately bound up in ritual lotus consumption, leaving the cultists heavily addicted to this powerful narcotic. Most spend their days at ease, contemplating the clouds while chewing on Lotus blossoms like cows chewing cud.

Even food gathering requires an effort of will that most of the Lotus Easters find difficult to put forth. Many starve as they get more and more wrapped up in their addiction; others are driven to search for food only when absolutely forced to by hunger. The only thing that can truly rouse a Dabban to action is a threat to the supply of lotus.

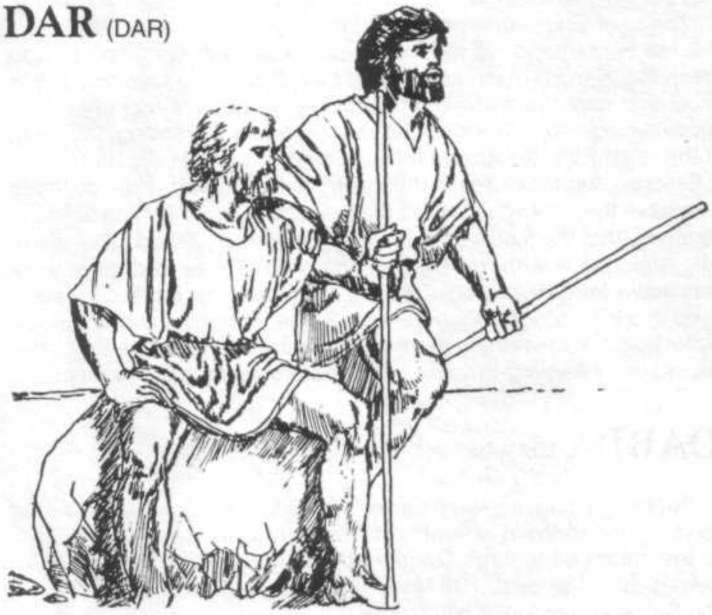
Dabba has been conquered frequently, but outside dominion never lasts. The Lotus Eaters take no notice of outsiders, and can only be driven to work or other activity by the most extreme measures. It has rarely proven to be worth the expenditure in manpower to try to administer the conquered territory, especially when garrisons and administrators themselves often succumb to the cult. Thus, most nations have given up trying to dominate the region. Indeed, many restrict all travel to or from the land, for the pleasure-centered Lotus Cult exercises a powerful compulsion over many.

The Gorgons prey upon the Dabbans, taking them as sacrificial victims or slaves. Actually, Dabbans are not valued as slaves, because of their addiction and their generally poor health, but some make passable concubines (of either gender); the Lotus Cult is overlaid with many sensual aspects that enhance their usefulness in such roles.

Corsairs of the Mediterranean Sea also raid Dabba, but less for slaves than for the Lotus powder itself. It commands a high price when sold (illegally) in other territories (it is believed that Tharshesh buys large quantities of the drug).

Qaddan has always coveted the Dabban peninsula, and has never quite given up the hope of annexing it. The harbors of the Mediterranean coast are considered some of the finest in the region, and could be the basis for a significant expansion of influence and trade. But until they can figure out how to deal with the Lotus Cult, the Qaddani will probably be content to leave the land of Dabba to its almost mindless inhabitants.

DAR (DAR)



Surrounded on three sides by water, Dar lies at the western extremity of the Dabban peninsula. The northern coast is defined by the Mediterranean Sea, the southern by the Sahara Sea, while the River Oceanus touches the western shore. Dabba, the land of the Lotus Eaters, lies to the east.

Like the Dabbans, the inhabitants of Dar are light brown in color and slightly built. Their features are Mediterranean, but their hair is usually dark and kinky. Darian men generally wear loin cloths, cloaks, and sandals; the women are even more simply clad, in plain, almost shapeless smocks. They are peace-loving and non-violent, a civilized but for the most part simple folk lacking interest in the arts or sciences (save only for pottery-making, which is a favorite and well-developed art form). Content with their simple lives, Darians rarely venture far from home.

The region is predominantly given over to farming, for the people of Dar have considerable skill in simple agricultural techniques. They have domesticated the auroch, using this great bull-like animal to pull their plows and carts, as food, and as a source for leather, bone implements, animal fat, and many other important resources.

Each Darian village is an entity unto itself, ruled by a village council. There is no unified government. The villages are simple, with huts made of woven grasses. They have no metal implements of their own, although a few imported items are sometimes found.

The religion of Dar is a druidic cult centered around the Earth Goddess Tama, one of the Old Gods. It is very conservative, rather dour, and lacking in the sensualism of the Lotus Eater cult of neighboring Dabba. The Lotus Eaters are regarded as being possessed by minor devils, and the Darians have an unremitting hatred for everything connected with the Lotus Cult. Dar is a peaceable nation. They trade on friendly terms with the wizards who dwell on the island of Dardanus, near the Darian coast. The wizards grant protection, plus occasional magical aid — to heal the sick, or to help fight drought and other threats, for example — in return for food shipped to them from Dar.

The Gorgons in the Sahara Sea covet both Dar and Dabba as possible outlets into the Mediterranean Sea (they are otherwise hemmed in by the Hesperians, their bitter enemies). The wizardly protection of Dardanus has thus far blocked any serious attempt against Dar though occasional Gorgan raids and other incidents along the southern coast are not unknown.

DARDANUS (dar-DAN-us)

Dardanus is a small island located off the coast of Dar in the Mediterranean Sea. Appearing from a distance as little more than a craggy mound of rock, this insignificant-seeming isle is actually the site of one of the most mysterious and wonderous places in the known world: *The Magical Institute of Dardanus*.

The Institute itself is a sizeable complex, built atop the highest point on the island and surrounded by a towering wall of stone. Both the outside walls and the structures contained within are constructed of white marble, transported stone by stone from quarries on the Atlantean mainland. The gates are of brass, with an outer layer of costly orichalc (a metal with magical properties used by Atlantean alchemists in the creation of superior swords, armor, etc.).

Dardanus was established centuries ago by the legendary *Grey Council*, an occult order dedicated to the preservation of the magical sciences and notable for its code of strict neutrality; political, religious, or necromantic beliefs and practices have never been allowed at the Institute. Though the original Council members have long since passed on, subsequent generations of instructors have continued to maintain this policy.

The magical and alchemical facilities at Dardanus are said to be unequaled throughout the known world. The Institute's instructors are highly regarded, each being a master of his or her respective field of magical study. Learned scholars from many lands reside here, and serve as curators of Dardanus' extensive museum and library complexes. Funded by contributions from a number of outside sources, Dardanus is able to offer extensive grants for magical research, exploration, and experimentation, thus providing the Institute with a constant influx of knowledge and arcane lore. Despite its reputation amongst members of the magical community, Dardanus remains a place of mystery as far as most common folk are concerned. The Institute's governing body (still called "The Grey Council") goes to great lengths to maintain Dardanus' security; intruders and curiosity seekers are dealt with in swift and often severe fashion. Only the people of Dar, who provide Dardanus with a variety of foodstuffs, are allowed to land upon the island without the express permission of the Council.

Spell casters and scholars who wish to study at Dardanus must apply in person at the Institute's Office of Regents, located in the city of Acheron, in Qaddan. A sizeable donation (100 g.p. per level, per week) is required of all such applicants, whether they wish to enroll at the Institute or simply use its research facilities. Adventurers seeking employment as explorers, expedition guides, etc. must likewise apply at the Office of Regents. A waiting period of 2-8 weeks (in either case) is not uncommon.

EMPI (EM-pi)

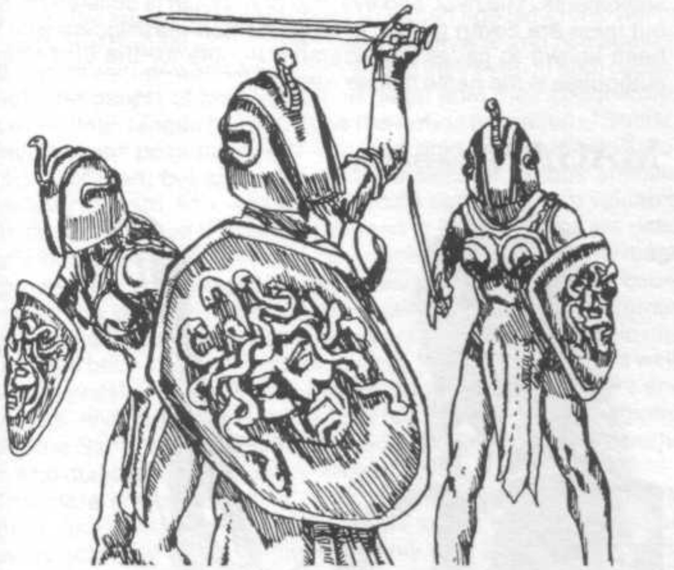
The island of Empi lies south of Punt, a large, desolate, uninhabited place shunned by seafarers for its terrible reputation. From far out to sea travelers can smell sulfur and pitch, and eerie red fires light up the rugged mountainsides of the island at night.

A few men are said to have visited Empi long ago, but evidently fled in terror and madness. Ancient records refer to Empi as "the Island of the Dark Gate," or "the isle that is larger within than without." Stories are related which claim that the island is somehow far larger than it should be, based on its actual circumference.

The ramblings of insane explorers speak of a vast land of a hundred changing climates only a few steps from one another, of soaring cities and dense jungles, and, over all, of a demonic kingdom which protects the island from intruders and sends out evil creatures into the world to do fell works and deeds.

At least one Atlantean sage is known to have speculated that Empi is actually a gateway between our world and many other planes of existence. If so, from Empi it might be possible to visit not only the demonic realm that apparently lies closest to Empi's gateway, but perhaps many other worlds.

GORGOS (GOR-gos)



The islands of Gorgos lie within the Sahara Sea. There are four major islands, Bogador (BO-ga-dor), Mogador (MO-ga-dor), Ogol (O-gol), and Ogarli (O-gar-lee), plus a number of smaller islands and rocky islets in and among these major land masses. These isles are jungle-clad, tropical paradises as lovely as Hesperia itself. Nonetheless, the name of Gorgos is a synonym for fear, for these islands are dominated by one of the most dreaded cultures in the world today.

This human culture, known as the Gorgons after the island group they inhabit, were originally an Amazon splinter-group who rebelled against the Queen of Hesperia long ago. In a terrible civil war, the Gorgons brought down the entire Hesperian empire. At its height, the Gorgon domain included much of northern Gondwana and parts of Mediterranea, but further wars with Hesperia gradually eroded this holding down to its island core. Now they control only the isles that dot the Saharan Sea, but constantly threaten to expand again.

The Gorgons are a civilized race, amply supported by the abundant resources of their tropical islands. But their culture has turned away from old Hesperian ideals by a decadent religion, the practice of black witchcraft, and an aggressive warrior culture which far exceeds anything the Amazons have ever practiced in terms of cruelty and violence.

The worship of Sefar, a war and magic deity symbolized by the snake, is at the heart of Gorgon culture. The Cult of Sefar tore apart the Hesperian empire, as the original Gorgons sought to impose their perverted cult on the rest of the Amazons. Over the centuries since the original civil war, Hesperia and Gorgos have fought almost constantly. Their hatred of one another is proverbial, and goes far beyond all rational bounds.

The Gorgons are known to covet the lands of Dar, Dabba, Qaddan, Zin, and parts of southern Mediterranea, along with Hesperia and its colonies. The elite ruling class of warrior-priestesses which governs Gorgos with an iron hand believes itself to be quite capable of carrying out these plans. A tall, tan-skinned, black-haired race, the Gorgons have a ruthless militaristic culture in which the females dominate and the males are kept as slaves. Men are treated far more harshly in Gorgos than in Hesperia, and are sometimes sacrificed to Sefar. Gorgons love to kill and conquer; individuals are indoctrinated from birth in this approach to life. Any who dissent are swiftly killed in a fiery sacrifice to the snake god.

Sefar's worship centers around a rare species of giant, hooded cobra found in any sort of quantity only in the Gorgos islands. This snake can attain lengths of up to 20 feet (most reach only ten), and its poison is both lethal and very fast-acting. The Gorgons are the only people who have ever been known to tame these snakes. Fittingly, the unicorn, symbol of Hesperia, is the only animal immune to the poison of the giant hooded cobra.

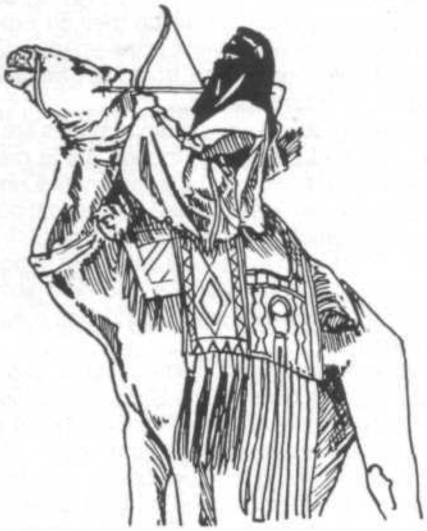
Most Gorgons are warriors, witches, or warrior/priestesses. Magic and religion are integrated closely with their military organization, making the Gorgons a powerful foe. The snake cult gives them an even fiercer aspect, for trained cobras accompany Gorgon warriors into combat and strike fear into the hearts of their opponents. The Gorgons give no quarter, and expect none in return. One historian referred to them, with some truth, as the "Makara of the land."

Gorgon warriors wear bronze helms, breastplates and greaves, all decorated with a snake motif. They favor the shortsword, javelin, spear, longsword, and longbow. Snakeskin cloaks, scabbards, and other such items are also common, and most of their warriors wear tattoos of snakes on legs or arms.

There are no large settlements in Gorgos except for the ports of Ogara (o-GAR-a) on Bogador, the main isle, and Abalessa (a-ba-LES-a) on Mogador. These two ports are mainly given over to the building and maintenance of warships, though warehouses are present to hold goods prior to distribution. There are no guilds or shops (save those directly related to war or ship-building), nor are there any places of entertainment.

The Gorgons wreak havoc against Atlantean and Hesperian ships when they can, but rarely molest those of Tharshesh (it is said that the Tharshi pay a heavy tithe in silver in exchange for protection from harrassment). The Gorgons have also been known to raid Dar, Dabba, Qaddan, and the Hesperian territories for slaves, who are sold to Tharshesh (usually to be put to work in the vineyards of Taranta or the mines of Tara or Targrim).

KUSH (Kush)



Rocky and arid, Kush lies on the northeastern coast of Gondwana. Qaddan lies to the northwest, Nubia to the southwest, and Masssawa to the south. The Red Sea and the Erythrarean Sea form the eastern limits of the realm. Most of Kush is desert scrub, with mountains in the south and west.

The western mountain range is a source for several minor rivers, which combine to form a tributary which joins the River Styx in Qaddan. A dam built here supplies the capital city of Okartum (oh-KAR-tum) with water. Extensive irrigation projects have been attempted in many parts of the realm, with limited success. Kush remains a poor land, with scarce food supplies (except for figs, dates, and similar produce) and a rather small population.

The people are related both to the Turanian tribes from the other side of the Red Sea and to the Qaddani. Men and women dress almost alike, wearing long, flowing headdresses, loose tunics, breeches, and simple sandals. Their environment has not been conducive to the development of the arts or the sciences, and they are often looked upon as semi-barbarians by more civilized neighbors.

Kush is ruled by a hereditary matriarch, called: *The Candace*. The title passes to the eldest daughter (or niece, if no daughters are available). When there are no females of royal lineage available, a King may come to the throne, but the succession reverts to the female line as soon as a female heir is available.

Though the Candace is titular head of the military, actual authority is delegated to a Council of generals, who are responsible to her but yield to her leadership only in times of crisis. For the most part, the military is a male institution. Women serve only in segregated platoons, usually guard units assigned to escort important leaders or foreign guests.

The bulk of the army is made up of cavalry (war camel),archers (the most highly regarded Kushite units) and light infantry. It is a small but highly efficient service. The navy is almost nonexistent, consisting of four antiquated warships purchased from Sheba. They are stationed at Salawa (sa-LA-wa), the principal port of Kush. Facilities at Salawa are rather poor, being confined to minor repairs, maintenance, and storage.

Salawa is, however, an important stop on the Sheban trade routes, and is the Kushite town most commonly visited by foreigners. Most items are imported from Sheba, though Tharshi wares also make their way to Salawa through Sheban or Qaddani intermediaries. The Merchant Quarter of Salawa is famed throughout Gondwana. It is a popular stop for adventurers and traders, notable for its excellent wares, aggressive bazaar merchants, and high-priced but high-quality merchandise.

Kush is rich in copper, but not so much so as Magan, Marhashi, or Ophir. There is enough to supply all of the local demand, with a small surplus exported in the form of jewelry and utensils. Tin is also mined here, a valuable commodity that is scarce in Gondwana and Mediterranea. The Kushites do not export their tin, however, using it instead to produce bronze items (some of which they do export). The very wealthy in Kush even display the great extravagance of pure tin utensils and implements. No foreign land, not even Sheba, has been able to gain access to Kush's tin supplies.

Sapphires and many other semi-precious stones are also common in Kush. Silver and gold are found, though not in great quantities. These metals and stones, worked by skilled native craftsmen into a variety of products, are much in demand in other nations. They serve as the basis for trade which keeps Kush strong despite the poverty of agricultural land. Food is an extremely important import, and is necessary to supplement Kushite produce and herd animals. Without such imports, even the relatively small population of Kush would suffer widespread famines.

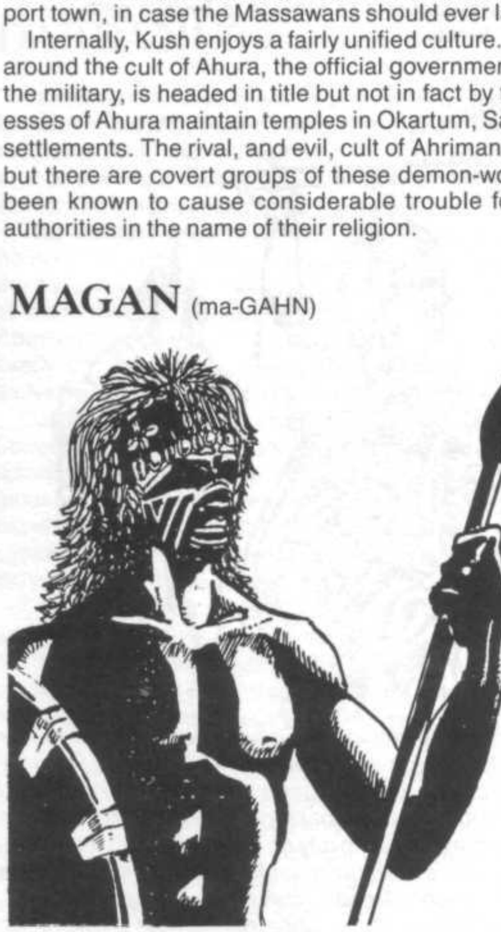
Kush has cordial relations with Joktan, just across the Red Sea, and is strongly allied with Sheba. The Sheban trade is crucial to the survival of the Kushite state, and the alliance is taken very seriously. Squads of warriors are assigned to accompany Sheban traders on their voyages, often spending long periods of time away from Kush before returning. Kush is also pledged to come to the aid of Sheba in the event of an attack on the trading realm, and especially on the island of Raamah.

Qaddan, on the other hand, is viewed with suspicion. Trade with Qaddan is important enough to keep relations friendly, but both nations maintain strong border outposts for surveillance and possible response to threats from each other.

Relations with both Massawa and Nubia are poor at best. Kush covets the good agricultural land of each of these neighbors, while the Nubians in turn covet the tin mines and other resources of Kush. Skirmishes between Nubia and Kush on the western borders are common, though seldom prolonged. Massawa, on the other hand, is viewed as a more serious threat. The port of Salawa, which is separated from Massawa by a range of mountains, is known to be a coveted target of Massawan expansionism. Forts and observation posts are thus maintained to keep close watch over the approaches to the port town, in case the Massawans should ever launch an attack.

Internally, Kush enjoys a fairly unified culture. Their religion is built around the cult of Ahura, the official government religion which, like the military, is headed in title but not in fact by the Candace. Priestesses of Ahura maintain temples in Okartum, Salawa, and the larger settlements. The rival, and evil, cult of Ahriman is outlawed in Kush, but there are covert groups of these demon-worshippers who have been known to cause considerable trouble for the civil religious authorities in the name of their religion.

MAGAN (ma-GAHN)



Lying just across the narrow straits from Punt is Magan, a nation which has evolved a hybrid civilization based on borrowings from all of its neighbors. Magan's terrain consists primarily of broad savannah, with a rugged interior rich in gems and metals. It is bounded to the northeast by Massawa, to the northwest by Samu, and to the south by the great realm of Marhashi. East are the straits, and Punt beyond; west lies Awalawa, the uncharted land. The human tribesmen who swell here (known as the Magani) are tall and ebony-skinned. They shave their heads, paint their faces with white pigments, and wear elaborate headdresses of cowrie shells and lion's mane. They are said to treat strangers with hospitality.

Magan is rich in mineral wealth, gold, diamonds, and copper being its most valuable commodities. Though other nations in the region may have richer sources of diamonds and gold, Magan is by far the biggest producer of copper in all of Gondwana (only Marhashi comes anywhere close as a potential rival). Magan's abundance of copper makes the metal extremely common as a material from which implements are constructed, or sometimes plated. There are fine coppersmiths and goldsmiths in Magan, and their best work decorates the King's palace in the might city of Zimba (ZIM-ba). This city, with impressive stone towers, walls, and buildings, makes extensive use of the Atlantean custom of plating stone walls with copper. The result is impressive, and Zimba is widely known as a city far in advance of most of southern and eastern Gondwana's other civilized areas.

Despite its reputation, however, Magan is not really as far advanced as Zimba's impressive appearance suggests. The backbone of the

Magan culture still comes from the country people, the herdsmen, hunters, and farmers who keep the populace supplied with food, leather goods, and similar necessities. Because of this, the wealth of Magan's precious metals can be used to buy luxury items and, more importantly, knowledge and service from other nations. Lying on one of Sheba's chief trade routes, Magan has flourished from the exchange of knowledge and ideas that accompanies the trade ships, and Zimba has acquired a multi-racial, multi-cultural look similar to that of Kaffir (in Ophir).

The area has had a history of repeated foreign domination and local resistance. Magan was placed under the Atlantean yoke during the First Age, when the region was colonized by outsiders who sought to enslave the population. The Magani eventually drove the Atlanteans out. The process was repeated when the Hesperian Amazon empire controlled the region. When Hesperia's Golden Age led to civil war in the north, the Magani were quick to take advantage and rise against the arrogant warrior-women who garrisoned their land. In both cases, though, the people of Magan learned much from their conquerors. Since that time, Magan has had close ties only to the nation of Sheba.

The Shebans prize not only the copper, gold, and diamonds produced by Magan, but also ivory, and the skins of various animals (especially leopard, lion, and zebra). Rhino horns are also valuable trade items. All these things are common in Magan; skins are used locally for clothes, and rhino horns are prized for their reputedly magical properties, or as material for carved works of art. In the back country along the borders of Samu and Awalawa live more dangerous beasts, including some smaller types of dragons. Now and again unicorns have been known to wander through Magani pastures, as well. The wilderness is to be feared, both because of the predators and monsters, and because of bandits who lurk in some remote regions. Along the Samu border, there is sporadic danger from the powerful Afiti who dominate that unhappy land.

The more civilized regions, though, are those where hunters, farmers, and herdsmen may live in relative safety. Herdsmen are particularly important to the Magani economy. The savannah supports great numbers of hump-backed, hoop-horned cattle which are used to provide meat, milk and leather for the whole population. The long, impressively looped horns are used for carvings and small sculptures, but the species is so common throughout all of Gondwana and Atlantis that these horn decorations have little value as a trade resource. Even so, Magani tools and weapons carved from these horns are accepted as barter in some regions.

Most herdsmen live near the various settlements of Magan. Great herding families own and work huge ranch estates, and enjoy considerable local prestige.

Cattle drives to settlements, military stations, and the capital are mounted on a regular basis, often organized to include several herds which together contribute to pay the costs of laborers and protection. The cattle are sold for meat and leather, while milk obtained from the cows is made into cheese and sold locally.

Farmers are an important factor in the economy of Magan, though they have less prestige than the herding families. The science of agriculture was retained from the days of the Atlanteans, and the crops grown in Magan are varied and abundant. Most of the major farming land is located around the two largest cities, Zimba and Nachikupu (na-chi-KU-pu). In most areas, though, settlers and country people maintain small plots where food for their own families is grown.

Hunters also form an important and highly respected part of the Magani economy. Most of the food they obtain goes to the tables of the very rich or powerful; the hunters also sell meat to organizers of festivals and large gatherings, and to foreigners in the city of Zimba. Exotic animal skins are also obtained by these rugged individualists, for use as clothing or to trade with foreign merchants.

The cities and villages of Magan are small and widely scattered, for the country is still primarily a land of herding and farming. Zimba is the only city which even approaches the size of the great cities of more sophisticated lands, with Nachikupu being far smaller. Though small (covering some 60 acres), Zimba is a colorful and varied town. A luxurious stone palace built for the King and his harem is one of the city's most famous landmarks, along with the great public circle lined with shops and taverns of every description. The city is enclosed by walls, but buildings have gone up outside these as well, and there is talk of enclosing a "New City" in a second, connected walled area. Other settlements of noteworthy size include: Zambezi (zam-BEE-zee), Buzi (BU-zee), Dondo (DON-do), Gwa (GWA), and Umtala (oom-TA-la). Zambezi is the principal port of Magan.

Magan is ruled by a king or queen who combines training as a warrior-chief with experience in the magical arts. There is an extended royal family, consisting of all living relatives of the current ruler, by blood or by marriage/association. Thus, even a King's concubines or a Queen's consorts, and all of their relatives, are considered party of the Royal Family. Upon death of a reigning monarch, the new monarch is drawn from this extended family, regardless of age or sex. Those eligible for succession to the throne demonstrate their proficiency in both military and magical prowess in a three-day competition. The applicant judged to be the most skillful is crowned as the new ruler.

The monarch does not have absolute power, but comes close enough to govern almost unchecked. The King or Queen can be temporarily blocked in any measure or action which is unanimously rejected, in a formal vote, by all uncrowned members of the current Royal Family.

The social classes of Magan are numerous and diverse, with relatively free social mobility. An exception is the Regal class, which is both privileged and highly exclusive. The Regal Class is made up of all members and descendents of members of all past and present Royal Families. The current Royal Family enjoys the highest status, and is the only group which has the right to vote against the monarch's decisions. Only the Regal Class may supply eligible marriage or association ties for the King or Queen. A Regal may marry individuals of lower class, but automatically loses Regal status and takes on the class of the spouse.

The Warrior Class is next highest, as Magan's rulers are first and foremost warriors. Class social rank directly translates as military rank, with advancement being limited and dependent upon bravery or extraordinary ability. The highest of the Warrior Class are the soldiers and officers of the Royal Guard (a private soldier of the Guard ranks the same as a field officer of ordinary services); the lowest are the sentries who patrol the streets of Zimba and Nachikupu. The elite Zebra riders (light cavalry armed with long spears and eliptical, animal hide shields) are the highest-regarded units in the Magani army.

The Scholar Class contains Priests, Wizards, Alchemists and Astrologers, plus Artists, Entertainers, Poets, Historians, and Orators, and others whose primary occupation is creative or philosophic. The mastery of a subject is used to establish rank within the class, with annual competitions to allow for advancement.

The High Citizen Class contains those whose careers have enabled them to amass wealth: successful craftsmen, merchant/traders, members of the great herd families, and so forth. Social ranking within the class is set by monetary worth, which is assessed each year. The Wealthy are expected to provide trappings and equipment for warriors: a high-ranking member of the class is expected to equip a Guardsman or a Zebra-rider, with lower ranks providing for individuals or groups among common soldiers.

The Citizen Class is comprised of all commoners, of any occupation, who cannot qualify for a higher class. The typical Citizen is a farmer or other self-sufficient countryman, or a small business man in Zimba or Nachikupo. Wealth determines rank within the class. The Citizen Class must also permit soldiers to be billeted in their homes when in the area.

The Beggar Class is composed of all those who must accept charity in order to survive. Any individual who accepts charity of any kind automatically assumes Beggar status for one year thereafter. Beggars must be registered at once with the government, for they are exempt from taxes but liable for service-in-kind (as laborers, servants to warriors on campaign, and so forth) as long as they remain on the Beggar Rolls. When a Beggar does accept charity, the time remaining on the Rolls is extended to one year; thus the individual must be self-sufficient for a year before assuming higher status. Citizens commonly report charity grants of any size, and a Beggar caught cheating is subject to enslavement. A Beggar who pays the value of all charities on record three-fold (to the government, as taxes of a sort) will be restored to Citizen Status immediately. There is no class rank distinction among Beggars.

Lowest of the classes is the Slave Class, composed of hereditary slaves, convicted criminals serving out sentences, and indentured servants. Most hereditary slaves are of foreign blood, having come to Magan from the Sheban slave trade routes. Indentured servants are people who seek an honorable way out of debt, negotiating with a rich patron (usually a High Citizen) to have all debts covered in exchange for a given period of servitude. At the end of the period, the debt is discharged and the servant becomes a Citizen on "probation" for another year. Freedom can be granted to any slave or servant, even a convict, for brave or noteworthy deeds, at the discretion of the patron/master. Foreigners arrested in Magan are often sold as slaves, sometimes to the Shebans.

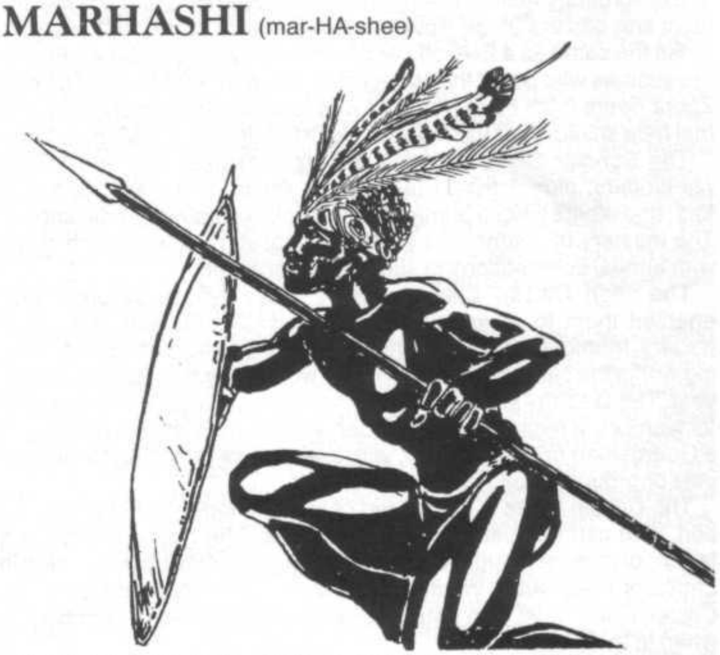
The religion of the Magani is officially centered around the cult of the Old Gods, the primary deity being Ash. The Magani King also functions as "High Priest" of the state religion, whose practices most closely resemble witchcraft.

The followers of Ash are quite fanatical in their beliefs, and rituals involving human sacrifices are not unheard of.

Though there are several other religious groups in Magan, they do not enjoy the official sanctions of the Magani government. As long as they pose no threat to the cult of Ash, they are tolerated. Any attempts to gain eminence over Ash's followers, however, are put to rest in swift and bloody fashion.

The vast wealth of Magan, and the diversity of cultures found there, produce a wide variety of careers and occupations among the inhabitants. Magic use is fairly common, though outside the Scholar Class most magic is studied as a hobby or pastime rather than a serious occupation. Adventurers often travel to Magan, for the land is a crossroads which stands astride the route to many exotic and colorful locales.

MARHASHI (mar-HA-shee)



Southernmost of the nations of the continent of Gondwana is Marhashi, a rich realm growing in power and prestige. As is typical of the Southlands, Marhashi contains a mix of veldt and rugged uplands, and like its neighbors is a land where diamonds and gold are quite common, along with copper and some other precious metals of various types. So common are precious metals in Marhashi that they are prized more for beauty, or to trade to other countries, than they are for any inherent value of their own.

Besides these resources, Marhashi is rich in cattle and ivory. Cattle provide the mainstay of the local food supply, and it was the herding society of Marhashi that stablized the land after the chaos of post-Hesperian times and permitted the growth of a sophisticated civilization. This growth was dramatically accelerated by the material wealth of the land, which attracted the Sheban trade. Now Marhashi exports the products so common on its own shores in exchange for rarer commodities such as iron, tin, luxury items, slaves, and the finest of tools, implements, and weapons.

In Marhashi, wealth means little when it comes to power or respect. Even the slaves have possessions which aristocrats in other countries might envy. The only real source of power in Marhashi is magic, for the government is a complex bureaucratic magocracy.

All government positions are held by magicians of one kind or another. Those with the greatest mastery of magic have superior positions in the government, and hence more say in running the country. Anyone who does not possess knowledge of magical practices is considered a second class citizen. Marhashi has but three social classes: Magicians, Citizens, and Slaves.

The magician class contains many ranks. Standing is based on the level of magic mastered and experience in previous governmental positions. The art of Sorcery is favored, but no form of magic is excluded from the class or discriminated against in any way. Religious magic is included, and priests are given jobs that stress dealing with the public and maintaining the government's image. Religion is the servant of the state, but a powerful and intelligent cleric could rise near the top of the hierarchy if he or she managed well.

The leader of the state is known as the Grand Wizard of Marhashi. The position is filled, usually for life, by the most prestigious magician in the realm. Theoretically open to any who rises through the bureaucracy, it is in fact a position which is generally open only to members of a handful of select families. These families have intermarried extensively, strengthening the bloodlines and consolidating power simultaneously. The Grand Wizard is empowered to rule as he or she pleases, a situation which has caused much strife amongst the lower classes, and even within the Magician Class.

Much of the real power of the Magician Class in Marhashi rests with the *Order of the Lion*, a secret fraternity organized among the inner circle families. A family which is part of the Order recieves an albino lion as a symbol of membership. The fraternity operates behind the scenes to maintain power in the hands of the inner circle, eliminating rival wizards who show signs of rising too quickly, or who are not considered eligible to include in the Order for one reason or another.

The Citizen Class is the largest in Marhashi being made up of all those who are neither wizards nor out-and-out slaves. They have very little in the way of influence or authority, and are treated strictly as a second-rate class. In general, their lot is a poor one, and discontent runs high at times.

Marhashi warriors are considered by the wizards to be the most highly respected citizens and as a result command a fair amount of loyalty. Armed primarily with short sword and spear, warriors act as bodyguards and garrisons to wizard estates, patrol city streets and village perimeters, watch over wharfs in seaports, and cover key border areas around Marhashi. A central reserve is kept in case of war or insurrection. Their loyalty is preserved through grants of extra luxuries and privileges not accorded to most citizens, and, as a result, there is a slight but noticeable coolness between warriors and other citizens; it usually emerges only as an arrogance on the part of warriors towards their inferiors.

Farmers have none of the potential freedom of their fellows, for they are bound to permanent residences near centers of population. They are expected to throw periodic festivals, at which magicians are given free food. The best 10% of all crops are claimed by the government in lieu of ordinary taxation.

Slaves are the lowest class, scorned by Magicians and Citizens alike. A magician's slaves have little chance to successfully avoid or leave the master's service. Citizens, though, have a great deal of trouble with runaways, since they have neither the power nor the prestige of the ruling class.

Slaves are an important part of the Marhashi economy, and a major import from foreign lands. Their numbers are further augmented by the Marhashi judicial system; most non-treasonous crimes carry slavery, either for a specific term of years or for life, as a penalty. Any children born to a slave, even those serving out a term of a few years, are themselves slaves for life.

Among themselves, slaves have an informal hierarchy, not recognized by their superiors but very important to those of their own kind. The slaves who belong to magician owners have much less freedom and live far harsher lives than their fellows, yet paradoxically take great pride in their status, and consider themselves better than ordinary slaves.

Citizen slaves have an easier life. The typical citizen treats slaves better than the typical magician, and regards the slave as a valued possession.

Some slaves volunteer for jobs — such as gladiator, bodyguard, slave-warrior, and so forth — which include the chance to perform a heroic act and achieve a grant of freedom. Though not a law, this is a tradition which is widely followed, particularly among the citizens. Convict/slaves may also look forward to release when their sentences are up, though those who behave badly can be given extended or permanent sentences. Those who begin as life-slaves, and perform routine duties, must depend on the whims of their owner for a chance to be set free.

The state religion is controlled by the Magician class, and is a largely ceremonial institution. The principle deity is supposedly the Old God Og. No consideration for the religious needs of citizens or slaves is given in the ceremonies of worship, though attendance of the seasonal rituals is compulsory. A variety of other cults, including those of several minor nature spirits and a secret shamanistic cult, are worshipped covertly.

Strangers in Marhashi are often surprised by the evident wealth of the populace.

They dress in brilliant-hued linens, and wear magnificent gold and diamond jewelry. Copper and even gold utensils are used by many, while the magicians ostentatiously display plates of precious metal affixed in the Atlantean style to the stone walls of their homes. Fountains built of copper and decorated with gold, ivory, and gemstones grace the homes of the wealthy, and the markets are filled with imported luxuries ranging from myrrh, frankincense, and herbal oils to fine wines, exotic foods, and even silk robes from distant Khittai.

These, though, are not true measures of wealth in Marhashi. True wealth is represented by the ownership of silver, tin, iron, amber, or gemstones other than diamonds, for these must be imported. As few craftsmen in Marhashi can work these substances, finished products are usually imported. Silver and tin are also imported in ingot form, the silver to be minted in coinage, the tin also for combining with copper for brass or bronze. These, in turn, are worked into the weapons and implements of luxury and prestige used in Marhashi. Ownership of iron weapons is restricted to important warriors; iron implements of any other kind may only be owned by a magician.

A variety of different metals is used for currency, including gold (the most common), silver, tin, brass, and bronze. Coins of brass and bronze are of equal value (though brass coins are smaller); they replace and are equivalent to the copper coinage of other nations, since copper coins are not used in Marhashi. Tin and gold coins are also equal in value, both being minted in the shape of flattened rings. Silver coinage is the most valuable of all. Money-changers will exchange foreign currency for Marhashi coin (for a fee of 25%), but it is illegal for others to engage in this practice.

Taxes are high in Marhashi. Citizens pay 20% of their gross worth (income plus holdings) each year (Magicians do not pay taxes, nor do slaves). Evasion of taxes is punishable by death, while inability to pay results in the confiscation of all property and life enslavement.

With clothing a prominent feature of even the lowliest inhabitants of Marhashi, the attention to fashion by all classes is constant. A particularly striking element of Marhashian fashion is the use of the irridescent-hued feathers of the Marhashi Blue Fowl (a breed of guinea fowl raised in Marhashi for food and eggs, virtually replacing the common chicken here) to make magnificently plumed headgear. Feathers imported from other lands — Puntian ostrich plumes, Magani peacock feathers, Atlantean flamingo plumes, and so forth — are used to equally vivid effect by the feathersmiths of Marhashi. Wizards (particularly female wizards) and foreign merchants and visitors lavish much business on the feathersmiths, and the favorable attention of the upper class often results in a few minor privileges for the Guild.

Physically, the Marhashi people are tall and lean, with shiny black skin and coarse black hair. Citizens wear starched white robes and caps. Marhashi warriors normally wear only loincloths, animal skin cloaks, and headdresses made of red ostrich plumes (many also carry shields of rattan or animal hide). Most colorful are the wizards of Marhashi, who dress in rich robes and wear masks of carved and painted ebony wood (typically fashioned in the likenesses of some demon or devil). Wrist and ankle bracelets are popular amongst all the classes.

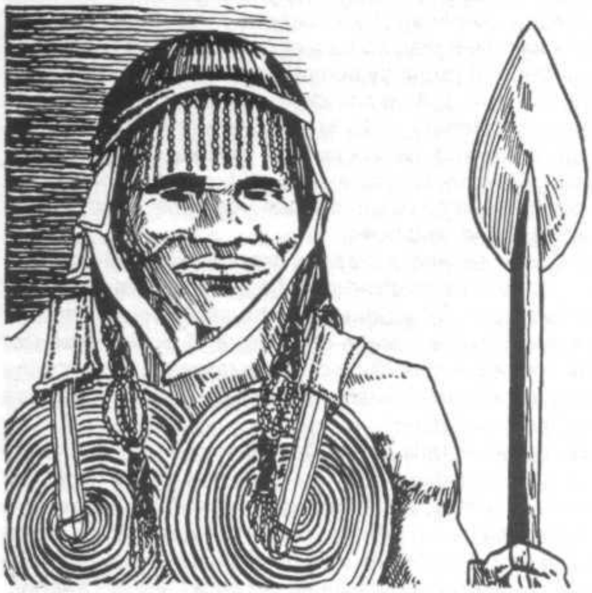
The settlements of Marhashi display similar diversity. Even though all consist of Magician estates, market circles, cropland and pastures, the layout of each settlement is extremely individualistic and reflects the surrounding terrain; blending into the landscape rather than overshadowing it.

The major population center and capital of Marhashi is Kuru (koo-ROO), a rocky coastal city which sprawls along the banks of the River Grut (groot). The inland areas contain the wizards' estates, and the coastal districts abound in markets, shops, storage sheds, and wharfs. Kuru is the only settlement that has a sizeable foreign population.

Other coastal trade settlements include, in descending order of size: Swazi (SWA-zee) and Umzinto (oom-ZIN-toh) in the east, and Zaldana (zal-DA-na) in the west. Inland herd settlement and mining camps include Zabazimbe (ZA-ba-ZIM-bay), Kompa (KOM-pa), and Daraka (DAR-a-ka).

The dangerous Daraka Mountain Range is a fierce refuge for several dragon species as well as other monstrous reptiles. These dangers cause many Sheban ships to bypass Swazi, and Umzinto, and head straight for Kuru.

MASSAWA (ma-SA-wa)



Part of Gondwana's eastern coastal region, Massawa is bounded on the south by Magan, to the west by Samu and Nubia, and to the north by Kush. The Erythraen Sea lies to the east. Jungle dominates much of the interior, where strange monsters and wild beasts roam, but the more open areas support a thriving human civilization.

The people of Massawa are tall, black-skinned humans. They prefer bright, single-colored cotton robes worn over one shoulder, and wear their hair in long, elaborate braids. Their culture is primitive in magic and science, and stresses militarism to a certain extent.

Most of the population is concentrated along the Awaash (a-WA-ash) River, and on the long Massawan coastline. The river is dotted with numerous small herding villages from the coast almost all the way to the river's source at the Lake of Dragons, a region where dragons come to breed. At the mouth of the Awaash is Massawa's capital, Adaama (a-DA-ma). This large city of clay buildings and tall stone stelae is a thriving port with a large foreign population, for Massawa has frequent contact with neighboring cultures and traders from distant realms alike. In addition to the villages of the Awaash valley and the Massawan coasts, there are military camps all along the inland borders of Magan, Samu, Nubia, and Kush. Ostensibly the camps are for defense, though they could as easily be used as bases for expansion into neighboring areas, which Massawa's military leadership covets.

Travelers are welcome within the realm, and there are large foreign populations not only in Adaama but also in many of the smaller villages. Sheban traders call regularly all along the coast, with Adaama one of their major ports of call on the southwestern trade route to Magan, Punt, and Marhashi. People from Magan, Nubia, and Kush are also quite common, drawn not only by trade but also by the lure of adventure; the interior of Massawa is renowned as a region of danger and of potential riches.

The land is a rich one, with many edible plants to support both the human population and their large herds. Gather-farming is widespread, though true agriculture is virtually unknown. Hunting provides diversity in the people's diet, but it is cattle herding which is the true foundation of Massawan life.

The government of Massawa is under the complete domination of the military.which is under the direct command of the King of Massawa. National security and integrity are most important to Massawa's citizenry, and the military is regarded as the most important institution of the land. Most Massawans serve in the military at one time or another, and warriors are the most common class among the population.

Magic is mostly confined to the priesthood of Massawa's shamanistic religious cult. Although state and religion are separate entities, and religious leaders officially have no political power, there is close cooperation between the military leadership and the religious hierarchy. Only the upper echelons of each group know the extent of cooperation that takes place in shaping policy and public opinion; the common citizen has no inkling of this alliance.

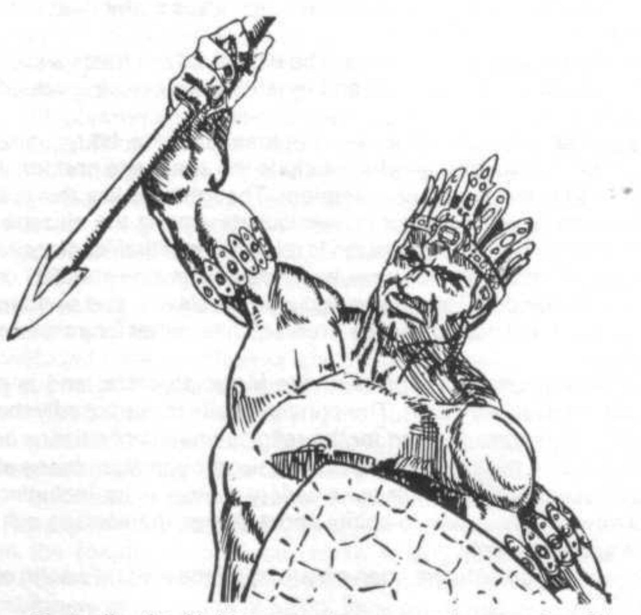
Social rank is directly based on past or present military rank. The army is very large, and primarily consists of infantry; a small navy operates along the river and up and down the coast. Both services make frequent use of archery — the Massawan archer is well-known throughout Gondwana and even beyond — with war clubs, javelins, and spears being the other favored weapons of most warriors. As the Massawans have little knowledge of metalurgy, most such articles are made of wood, stone, and bone.

Those not currently serving in the army are mostly cattle herders or gather-farmers. Others are involved in crafts, or in occupations which provide for the distribution of goods and for the comfort of citizens and travelers alike. Massawa is a realm of plenty, and would be almost idyllic if it were not for the imposition of heavy taxes and the growing sense of impending warfare. (Relations with Nubia and Magan have always been somewhat tense.)

Massawa is not particularly rich in natural resources. Their chief exports are ivory, animal skins, and semi-precious stones. Gold, silver, and copper are scarce, and hence quite valuable. Adventurers are drawn to Massawa by the promise of wealth reputed to be lost in the uncharted interior of the realm. Hoards of plundered treasure are believed to exist in the dragon caves around the Lake of Dragons. Another lure is the lost city of Melka Kontaurea (MEL-ka kon-TO-ooree-a), an ancient Atlantean city said to lie in ruins on the shores of the same lake. It is said to be home to vast treasures and malevolent wraiths, though despite local legends, no one in the realm is actually known to have ever visited the ruined city.

NUBIA (NU-bee-a)

The landlocked nation of Nubia is a land of jungle and savannah, combining aspects of the central and eastern regions of Gondwana. It is bordered by Qaddan to the north, Kush to the northeast, Massawa to the southeast, Samu in the south, and the ill-defined reaches of Awalawa in the west. Nubia is home to a variety of beasts: wild herd animals that roam the wide savannahs, giant crocodiles along the banks of the River Styx, and large herds in the forests and jungles. But Nubia's people are of the greatest interest in any discussion of the land.



Pysically, the Nubian people are very impressive. They are tall (rarely less than six feet in height and often as much as seven feet tall), with ebony skin and close-cropped, kinky black hair. Their clothing is distinguished by the common use of necklaces of hammered copper plates or disks and colorful silk or dyed cotton headdresses copied from the Qaddani style. They also wear loin cloths and loose robes or tunics, depending upon their immediate needs.

The Nubians are not very advanced in any of the arts or sciences, being simple hunter-gatherers who roam the land in small bands. They are not a violent or aggressive people, yet nonetheless have a deservedly fearsome reputation as warriors. Their skill in the use of spear, javelin, and bow is legendary, and Nubian mercenaries are in demand throughout much of the civilized world.

The great chieftan of Nubia, to whom the lesser chiefs pledge allegiance, negotiates with foreign powers and groups to provide mercenary soldiers (who are then recruited on a voluntary basis) in return for a variety of trade goods. In this way, Nubia can procure metal products not available in the land, where only copper is commonly mined and worked. The sale of war-skilled manpower permits them to obtain the finest weapons and armor in the world. Even Atlantean steel and iron products have become almost commonplace in Nubia, thanks to numerous generations of professional mercenaries.

Qaddan is Nubia's main customer for mercenaries, and always maintains large contingents of these fine warriors. Sheba and Tharshesh also use Nubians frequently, commonly posting at least one squad of mercenary soldiers on any trade ship which bears especially costly cargo. But foreign nations do not have a monopoly on mercenary use; private interests make up a significant portion of the list of Nubian customers. Wizards sometimes employ Nubian mercenaries as personal guards, adventurers add them to expeditions of all kinds, rebels or revolutionaires hire them to support attempted coups, and so on.

Due to their reputation, Nubian mercenaries command at least 25% more than the standard rates. The price includes the re-outfitting of the mercenaries with the best available weapons and armor. Employers are also expected to provide food and shelter for the troops for the entire period of their employment, from recruitment in Nubia to their return to that nation.

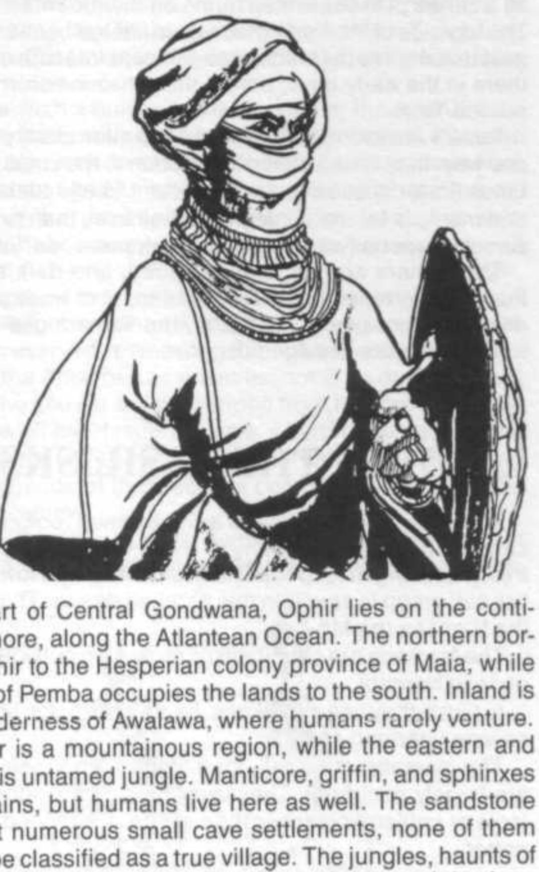
Nubian military units include infantry armed with spears and clubs (who are the best of all mercenary forces), bow-armed archers (sometimes claimed to be the equal of Hesperia's Amazons), trained war elephants with highly skilled mahouts, and onager-drawn chariot forces (using wood-framed, two-wheeled chariots plated with copper).

Nubia's other exportable resources include animal skins and furs, copper jewelry, and sculptures of wood and ivory. Ebony and ivory statuettes are prized by collectors as far away as Sheba and Atlantis, but are far from common and command an extremely high price.

Nubian religion revolves around Eloah, one of the Old Gods, but each band worships in its own, highly personalized way. Some of the myriad Qaddani cults have begun to gain followers in the north of Nubia, but for the most part, religion is outshone by the call of personal glory. Most of the cults that do flourish are shamanistic, with some based in witchcraft. Aside from the occasional wizard-chieftans, these are the only common strongholds of magic in Nubia.

The Nubians tend to be very tolerant of other religious beliefs, and expect the same of others. They are very hostile to any religion which practices forcible conversion, intolerance, or aggressive missionary tactics, and have been known to refuse, or even to turn against, employers who exhibit such beliefs.

OPHIR (oh-FEER)



Considered part of Central Gondwana, Ophir lies on the continent's western shore, along the Atlantean Ocean. The northern border connects Ophir to the Hesperian colony province of Maia, while the Avakuli tribe of Pemba occupies the lands to the south. Inland is the ill-defined wilderness of Awalawa, where humans rarely venture.

Northern Ophir is a mountainous region, while the eastern and southern interior is untamed jungle. Manticore, griffin, and sphinxes roam the mountains, but humans live here as well. The sandstone cliffsides support numerous small cave settlements, none of them large enough to be classified as a true village. The jungles, haunts of many wild beasts, are basically uninhabited by humans. It is along Ophir's coast that the major centers of population are located.

The inhabitants of these rich trade centers are black-skinned people, nearly as tall as the Nubians. They wear loose-fitting white kaftans and elaborate burnooses. Most citizens also wear a great deal of jewelry (especially gold and copper items) on their arms, ankles, and necks.

Ophir is a fabulously wealthy land, with extensive mines where gold, diamonds, and lead are unearthed in vast quantities — enough to make Ophir the leading exporter of all three commodities. Silver, copper, and quartz are also mined extensively, as well as limited amounts of tin and iron. Trade brings in large quantities of Atlantean iron and steel, which are used by the Ophirian military for weapons and armor. Bronze is also worked to round out the arsenals of Ophir.

Ophir's great wealth has made it a major commercial center, and it is a major trade partner of Atlantis. Links to Okalo and Marhashi (and from there to distant Sheba) are also important.

Another important part of Ophir's growing power is the development of magical studies in the realm. Proximity to the culture of Atlantis has helped the growth of sophisticated alchemical and magical research. In Ophir's capital, Khaffir (ka-FEER), a university has been established which enjoys the respect of Sages, Alchemists, and Wizards from Atlantis to Sheba, and even as far off as distant Meluhha.

Along with Khaffir, the most notable settlements in Ophir are the coastal towns of Kintampo (kin-TAM-po), Anokchatt (a-nok-CHAT), Ogbu (OG-bu), and Tema (TE-ma), along with two inland settlements — primarily built around the mining business — Adaamaawa (a-da-a-MA-wa) and Ogwaashe-Uk (og-WA-she-OK). Each of these towns is a minor trade center, though the capital of Kaffir is the most popular stop-over point for visiting foreigners. The fabulous entertainment districts found in Khaffir are said to be second only to those of Tharshesh in terms of the many and varied diversions available there. Many taverns and inns host extravagant shows for their patrons, and there is a great stadium where athletic events, gladiatorial contests, wild beast shows, and other attractions are staged. In certain towns throughout Ophir, each full moon is observed with great week-long festivals which cater to citizen and foreigner alike.

The cities of Ophir attract an unsavory element, too, especially during the festivals. The wealth of the realm and the large number of rich foreigners who travel to Ophir draw thieves and other criminals in great numbers, all of them seeking their fortunes by less than reputable means. Although Ophir possesses a large and powerful army, the military is generally too preoccupied with guarding wild frontiers to function effectively as a police force.

Protecting the border with Pemba is a difficult task. The unpredictable Avakuli tribes, despite trade agreements, often venture across the Pemban border to raid and loot nearby settlements, and frontier garrisons must be ready to respond to this sort of threat at any time. The military has similar problems on the eastern frontiers, where predatory beasts and other dangerous creatures often cross from Awalawa to terrorize the southeastern regions of Ophir. At times, the military contingents are hard presssed to maintain order, though Ophir's army is well-trained, and equipped with the best armaments money can buy. Their favored weapons are spears, short swords, javelins, longswords, and both long and short bows.

The government of Ophir is an ancient monarchy, with an unbroken line of kings stretching back to the days of the Hesperian empire. Ophirian government is fair and reasonably liberal (as monarchies go) and enjoys the support and trust of the people. Each village and town is run by a Council of Elders, made up of respected hunters, warriors, and Shamans. In Khaffir, a similar council advises the King and assists in the government of the realm.

The religion of Ophir is shamanistic, and carries the polytheistic worship of the Old Gods to great extremes. The bewildering variety of gods in Ophir's pantheon has lost much of its former following, as the citizenry becomes cynical and more interested in philosophy than religion. A great deal of lip-service is paid to the various Ophirian deities, but there are few who truly believe in all the ins-and-outs of their confused religion.

OKALO (o-KA-lo)

Bounded to the north by the Okwilu tribe of Pemba, to the south by Marhashi, and to the west by the Atlantean Ocean (with a portion of the eastern frontier fading into the Awalawa territory), Okalo is a land in a state of flux. Once part of the Hesperian empire, the region was involved in the same insurrections that won freedom for their Okwilu neighbors. But, as in Pemba, the freedom also brought on a decline of civilization to a simple, primitive culture.

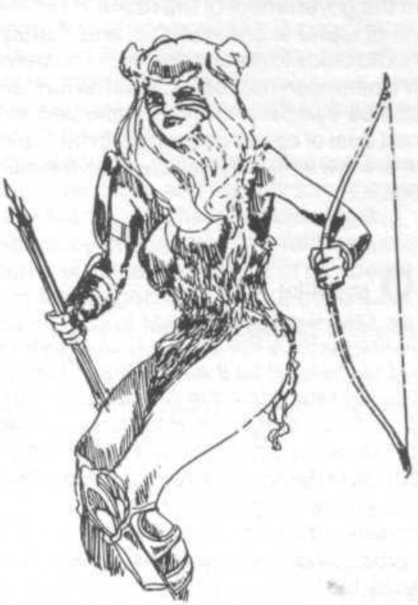
Okalo is considered a part of Gondwana's southlands, being characterized by broad savannahs along the coasts, but with rugged, volcanic highlands further inland. The dual nature of the region has given Okalo its start back towards civilization much more quickly than Pemba, where the wild jungles force the people to remain, first and foremost, nomadic hunters. In Okalo, the inhabitants moved from this stage to that of herdsmen fairly quickly, and were no longer dependent on the movements of game to dictate their own movements. The eventual result was the growth of permanent villages in the richest grazing areas, incipient agriculture, and the growth of crafts and other areas of specialization.

In the interior, the rediscovery of diamond deposits has provided an additonal inducement for permanent settlement, and has become the basis for trade with other nations. The diamonds are traded to other lands — notably Tharshesh — in return for metal weapons and utensils. Okalo trades some of these, to neighboring Akwilu tribesmen in return for ivory, and as a means of bribing the Akwilu to remain in their jungles. There was a time, not very long ago, when the Pemban tribe raided out of the jungles to steal cattle, crops, and slaves, but the trade in metal weapons — which counters the trade between Ophir and the Akwilu tribe's archrivals, the Avakuli — has virtually put an end to these incidents. Now and again, though, raids do take place, making peace between the two lands uneasy at best.

Except for a few mining villages in the highlands, most of Okalo's population is spread among small herding villages and fledgling cities among the savannah. The largest of these is the coastal city of Kaguata (ka-GWA-ta), the capital of the realm. Kaguata is the center of foreign trade, and has the largest concentration of craftsmen and merchants in the land. It is also a center of government, and the base for the "army" of the realm. Other settlements include: Kaloa (ka-LO-a), Ondanagua (ohn-da-NA-gwa), Usako (yu-SA-ko), and Obis (O-bis).

Okalo is not a particularly close-knit nation; it is more a loose hegemony of villages which have banded together for trade and defense purposes. Each village is ruled by a shaman, usually a priest of Og, the patron deity of this male-dominated culture. Settlements have their own contingents of warriors for local defense, a few craftsmen, and a sprinkling of merchants. The hereditary shaman-chief of Kaguata is acknowledged as King of Okalo, and is supported and advised by a council of elderly shamans who are themselves former village rulers. After a specified number of years (varying from village to village) the ruler passes his power to a successor and takes his place in the High Council. Thus the King's advisors represent the interests of the individual villages, and the shaman class acts as an intermediary among the king, the people, and the gods.

The warriors in Kaguata form the only centralized army in the realm. They defend the city, protect the king and council, serve as guards aboard the Okaloan trading ships, and deter aggression between settlements. From time to time they mount retaliatory raids against Akwilu tribesmen or bandits out of Awalawa.



The Okaloans are of average height, lean and agile of build, and usually adorn themselves with lion claw jewelry and colorful wrap-around robes. Their skin is walnut-brown and their hair is jet black. They occasionally use body paint. Their favorite weapons include the spear, short bow, and club.

Deep in the Okaloan highlands lies Mount Tama, site of an ancient citadel built during the Hesperian empire's age of conquest. The citadel is only a legend among the Okaloans, but it actually does exist; it was built near the sites of several rich diamond mines to secure Hesperian interest, and was also a crucial garrison for the Amazons during the wars of the breakup.

Descendents of those last Amazons survive in the citadel even yet, isolated for centuries. During the war the garrison received orders to remain at the citadel until relieved. No relief ever came, but such was the honor of these female warriors that none could even consider violating those orders. They maintain the traditions of their homeland, and a culture little changed from that of their Hesperian foremothers. They also know that Okalo was once theirs, and now is not; they perceive it as their duty, once they have grown strong enough, to reassert Amazon rule over the land.

The Tamara (women of Tama) preserve the warrior-hunter traditions of their native land, with rule by a female matralineal society specializing in combat. They have a large population of slave males who till a series of cliffside step farms on the mountain below the citadel. The legends of Mt. Tama which have filtered back to the lowlands suggest that the citadel holds a magnificent treasure of diamonds stored there in the early days, before the Amazons shut down their mines around Tama.

Tama's Amazons parallel those of contemporary Hesperia in all but one way: they are all united in devotion to the Lotus religious cult. The Lotus flower is sacred, and important to all rituals and ceremonies, and magic is far more integral to their lives than to the average Amazon of Hesperia (who considers such practices "unwomanly").

The Tamara are tall, blonde-haired, and dark skinned. They cut their hair to resemble a lion's mane, and wear only lionskins and ancient armor pieces. In battle, the Tamara use short bows, short swords, and broad-edged daggers.

LAND OF THE BASILISKS

Along the coast of Okalo is a small desert region. It is known as the Land of the Basilisks. Many of these vile creatures roam the desert freely, causing most people to avoid the area. However, a small basilisk cult group lives within this parched desert. They call themselves, the Namaba (na-MA-ba).

The Namaba are cannibalistic regarding outsiders and the dispoal of dead Namabi.

In battle they use only slings, hand-held rocks, shaman magic, and savage unarmed combat.

The Namaba are a tall, long-limbed, ebony-skinned people who are largely nocturnal. They wear no clothes, nor do they make any tools or implements other than slings, sharpened sticks, and crude pottery.

PEMBA (PEM-ba)

The name Pemba, and the boundaries given on most maps, are actually a holdover from the era when this land was dominated by the Amazons of Hesperia. It was one of the first regions to break away when Hesperia declined, and has since been split into two separate nations. These are Avakuli and Okwilu, two realms completely at odds with one another since the last Hesperians in these lands departed centuries ago.

In physical appearance the occupants of these regions differ substantially. The Avakuli wear only bright body paint and an occasional piece of jewelry or other such adornment. They are of medium height, chocolate-brown skin, and have kinky black hair (usually dyed in several colors). Their enemies, the Okwilu, wear drab-colored skirts and capes, and hideous masks of woven straw, beads, etc. The Okwilu are above-average in height, light brown of skin, and have very curly black or dark brown hair. The males often color their hair and beards with red ochre.

Pemba is considered a part of the interior of Gondwana, dominated by a tropical jungle and alive with a multitude of strange beasts. The Okawala River, which divides the region, is the haunt of otherwise extinct reptiles and many dangerous animals. Other parts of the land are equally wild. The human inhabitants are primitive and warlike, a product of their brutal environment.

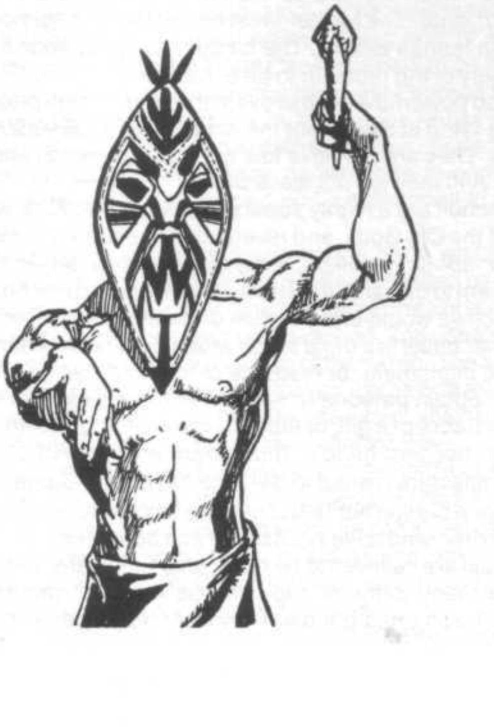
The Avakuli live in the northern half of Pemba. The boundaries of their range are Ophir in the north, the Okawala River to the south, and the Atlantean Ocean to the west. Eastwards, their territory gradually fades into the thick, mysterious, dangerous wilds of Awalawa, where humans rarely go. The Avakuli do not have settlements, but make seasonal migrations within a small territory.

The Avakuli tribe's culture is derived from that of the dimly-remembered age of the Amazons. Female warriors are dominant among the Avakuli. Women are hunters and fighters, the men gather vegetables, prepare meals, and maintain the villages. All positions of power, and all decisions, rest in the hands of the women. The principle deity is one of the Old Gods, the goddess Hawwa, and the worship is Shamanistic in nature.

Though primitive, with a hunter-gatherer culture, the Avakuli tribe conducts extensive trade with neighboring Ophir. Exports from the Avakuli realm include ivory, furs, and rare plants and animals from Pemba's jungles, exchanged for metal implements which the Avakuli cannot manufacture for themselves. Avakuli Amazons are well-armed, carrying Ophirite spears, machetes, bows and arrows, and even some armor.

Diametrically opposed to the principles and culture of the Avakuli are their southern neighbors, the Okwilu tribe. They, too, have traditions and poorly-preserved memories of the Amazon age, but the Okwilu remember the Amazons as enemies, not to be emulated, but rather despised. The Okwilu are descended from the Pembans who first rose up to throw off the Hesperian yoke, when Hesperia's empire was already dangerously weakened by internal strife. They succeeded, and the legends of that success continue to dominate the tribe's outlook and culture.

Like the Avakuli, the Okwilu are a hunting-gathering society, but with a male-dominant social structure. The men are warrior-hunters, the women chattel slaves. All the sexual roles of the Okwilu people are completely reversed from those found among the Avakuli. Though the two tribes share a common ethnic origin and a similar basic life-style, they are worlds apart in their beliefs and principles, and bitterly hostile to one another. Even their religions have little in common; the Okwilu worship Og, one of the Old Gods. His druidic religion was first imported into the region long before the Hesperians came, but its stress of the "Male virtues" caused it to be driven underground under the Amazons.

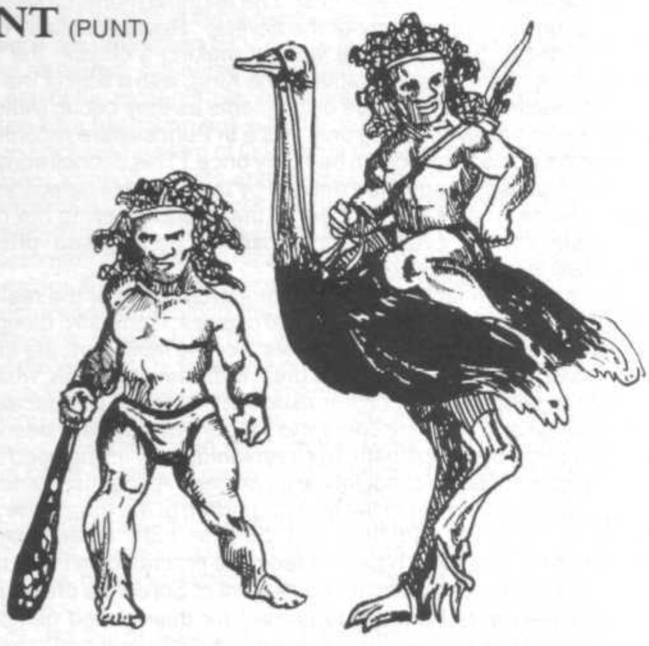


The Okwilu range through much of southern Pemba, bounded to the north by the Okawala River, to the west by the ocean, and to the south by the realm of Okalo.

East lies Awalawa, where none of the tribe dares to venture. A flourishing trade goes on between the Okwilu and Okalo, similar to the Ophirite trade of the Avakuli in most major respects.

The emnity between the two tribes, each representing opposite ways of life, is fierce. Each tribe loathes the other, regarding their social system as a distortion of the proper order of life. They fight when they come in contact, though the dangers of the Okawala River tend to keep them apart most of the time. Both share the opinion that foreigners are not to be trusted, and regard any who deal with their enemies, or who fail to display the proper beliefs in the roles of men and women, as enemies themselves, without regard for intentions or actions to the contrary.

PUNT (PUNT)



The island of Punt is generally considered a part of Gondwana, though in fact it lies between the continents of Gondwana and Lemuria, and guards the two passages between the Erythryan Sea and the Forgotten Sea of the south. Still, in terms of climate and terrain it is most closely similar to the southlands of Gondwana, and hence is classed as part of that region.

Punt is the setting for many exotic and outlandish stories. When an Atlantean or Tamoanchanian wishes to refer to the strange or the mysterious, the land of Punt is one of the first places that comes to mind. The island is famed for an abundance of myrrh trees, which produce an aromatic scent unlike any other in the world. It is said that a seaman can navigate to and from the shores of Punt merely by following the smell of myrrh wafted on the sea breezes.

The island is rich in precious stones, as well. One familiar though exaggerated saying claims that a spadeful of earth from Punt can keep a man in style for a year, so common are the valuable gems buried there. The rugged land holds a variety of wildlife, too; ostriches and baboons are especially notable because of their domestication by the island's inhabitants.

Punt is a Dwarven land, inhabited by a race most closely akin to the Dwarves of the Elysium Sea, though no one knows how the two groups became separated geographically and culturally. The Dwarves of Punt average four feet in height.

Their build is fairly standard, but they have sturdy constitutions. Skin color is generally dark brown, though some lighter coloration is found from time to time. Facial hair is virtually non-existent, but the black, kinky hair on their heads is worn long and in a variety of intricate dreadlock styles. Such personal ornamentation is used to suggest social standing and occupation.

The Puntian Dwarves have a flourishing, civilized culture. They build above-ground — unusual for Dwarves — using a poured-stone process known only to their artisans. Buildings are small and sturdy, and are created with an individual artistry symbolic of Puntian character. Even the Royal Citadel is not a large, imposing structure, but rather a collection of smaller buildings set seemingly at random in the enclosure of the park-like Royal Preserve. The most elaborate structures on Punt are the labyrinthine mines, each representing many centuries of toil by generations of Dwarven miners.

Culturally, the Dwarves of Punt are quite unlike most other members of their widespread race. Where most Dwarven societies are built around a warrior class, the Puntians are more diversified, with a complex social structure that gives almost equal importance to several different abilities and talents.

Punt is ruled by a monarch of one of the three upper classes (Warriors, Alchemists, and Magicians). The reigning monarch selects his successor from among any of the several "Royal Families" of Punt prior to death. Should he die without making a choice, the throne goes to the nearest male relative of the King, with a vote of the King's Council settling any disputes or problems as they occur. (Automatic succession has taken place only thrice in Punt's entire recorded history, and a council vote on an heir only once.) This council consists of a host of advisors appointed entirely by the King. He delegates such power as he wishes to members of the council, having the right of complete control over the composition, duties, and privileges accorded to these advisors.

The King is, in fact, an absolute monarch, head of the realm, the council, and all three of the top social classes. Generally, though, the King makes little use of these powers. For the most part, the Kings of Punt have allowed their subjects great individual freedom, while they remain in solitude and contemplation in the Royal Citadel atop Mt. Amadagascara. They are content to set general policies, steering the realm along a particular path, but intervening only as the need arises.

The upper classes of society are Warriors, Alchemists, and Magicians, with warriors being the least important of the three. The Alchemists of Punt, in particular, are held in high esteem by their countrymen. Few other types of magic are practiced on Punt, though there is a small but significant contingent of Sorcerers on the island.

The Dwarves of Punt are renowned for their skilled gemsmiths. Even their ordinary jewelry is superb in quality and craftsmanship. Magicians and Alchemists frequently combine with jewelsmiths to construct truly marvelous magical amulets, and many forms of jewelry in the land are commonly endowed with magical properties in ways that cannot be duplicated beyond the shores of Punt. The Dwarves are jealously possessive of these artifacts, and rarely part with them willingly. Though common in Punt, they are quite rare even in the nearby realms of Magan and Marhashi.

Merchants and craftsmen are also a respected class, though by no means as important as the masters of the magical arts. Puntian merchants have established relations with other seafaring nations, especially Sheba far to the north. Punt's exports include ebony, ivory, perfumes, incense, myrrh, frankincense, valuable woods, resin, antimony, jewels of all kinds (and some jewelry), trained baboons, ostriches, and slaves. In return for these items, they import a variety of metals and luxury goods.

Punt's warrior class is powerful, even if it is eclipsed by the magicians and alchemists. They are charged with the defense of the realm, and are ultimately answerable only to the King. Punt is unusual among the Dwarven realms in developing a "cavalry" branch to their army. The dwarves have bred a strain of giant ostriches that can carry the weight of an armed dwarf on their backs, and trained them to fight in battle themselves with slashing, brass-shod talons. Baboons have also been domesticated and trained by the Puntians, and are used as "watchdogs", attack animals, and for some simple menial labor. Both ostriches and baboons are kept as pets by the wealthy; ostriches, in addition, are raised for their feathers (for apparel and for export to other lands), and as a source of meat and eggs.

Once, early in the island's history, Punt was as rich in workable metals as it still is in gemstones. Long ago, however, the best veins of ore were all thoroughly exploited; while some mines still produce metal, it is of decidedly inferior grade. (The dwarves now import most of their metals.) The extensive mines of the old days remain, vast labyrinthine structures which delve far below ground. Most have not been used in generations, and it is probable that no living dwarf knows the full extent of the tunnels today. It is believed that some of the mines have tapped into a subterranean world unknown to the surface dwellers, for several have reportedly become underground havens for mysterious creatures of unknown origin. As with most such tales, the true facts are unknown.

SAMU (sa-MU)

Samu, like Awalawa and Pemba, is considered a part of the Interior of Gondwana, though geographically speaking this is true only of the western half of the country. To the east, beyond the chain of rivers and lakes that divide the country, the terrain and climate takes on the characteristics of the east coast region of the continent. The land is bounded on the north by Nubia, to the east by Massawa, and to the south by Magan. The western "border" is with Awalawa, and tends to be indistinct and uncertain. Samu is rich in all manner of life, but only a single human tribe inhabits, or even chooses to venture into, the region.

The reason for this sparse habitation stems from the presence in Samu of a number of the dread Afiti (ghoulish shamans; see: **THE BESTIARY** for a description of this evil form of Undead being). The Afiti of Samu have divided the land amongst themselves, and prey upon the living both within the region and in neighboring territories as well. The power of the Samu Afiti is great, and they are much feared.

Under Okioga Lake lives one of the most powerful of all Afiti anywhere. He claims the title of "Master," and his fellow Afiti acknowledge his right to this claim, though there is no true hierarchy or cooperation among this evil race. Such is the Master's power, however, that some lesser Afiti come to him from time to time to adjudicate disputes (which are few, as individual Afiti generally avoid other of their own kind). The Master must be paid for this service, the price to be met in human victims. The amount depends upon the nature and complexity of the problem to be solved.

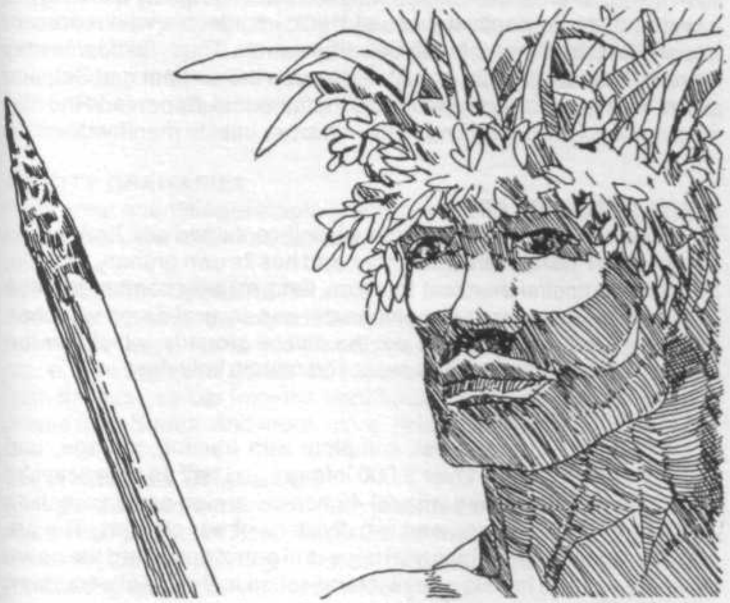
With so powerful a force of evil in the land, it is surprising to find any humans living in Samu, but the Acholi tribe of Samu's Achwa district does so. They are primitive folk with unusual ways, and though they fear the Afiti they will not leave Samu.

The Acholi are a highly supersititious people. They worship a pantheon of the Old Gods, and revere many hundreds of lesser forces — nymphs, spirits, familiars, even the Afiti themselves. Their religion binds them to the land; they believe that leaving their hunting grounds of the Achwa would bring certain disaster upon all their people.

Another belief is a tribal taboo which forbids any adult Acholi to use any tool, implement, or resource of the land that he or she does not make or obtain personally. After a rite of passage into adulthood, no Acholi will accept a gift, or make use of anything not made or obtained by his or her own hands. Thus, trade with the Acholi is impossible even if outsiders wished to dare the hazards of Samu for such a purpose. Each person hunts and gathers food individually, sharing it only with children who have not passed into adulthood.

The Afiti are believed to be gods, and are greatly feared. The Acholi practice many forms of superstitious magic to protect themselves against the shaman-ghouls. They wear necklaces and belts made of the claws and teeth of animals they kill, one claw and one fang being removed from every kill made. These are blessed by their tribal shaman, and are supposed to protect the individual from the power of the Afiti as long as they are worn, or as long as no more potent taboo is broken.

There is no gender-based bias in Acholi society. Men and women are completely equal, and are each expected to live completely independent of all aid. Those strangers who adopt the Acholi way of life, and who break none of the taboos, will be tolerated by the tribe, but an offense against the taboos usually results in the sacrifice of the perpetrator to the Afiti. It is common practice for such offenders to be bound, gagged, and left in the vicinity of an Afiti's hut.



Physically, the Acholi are short and slender, averaging 5 ft. 6 inches and 120 pounds. Their skin is an olive brown but is usually covered with grey mud (an effective deterrent against biting insects). They wear only a strip of leather as a loincloth and adorn their stiff, straight, black hair with colorful bird feathers. Their weapons are crude, the most popular being a sharpened variety of throwing stick.

QADDAN (ka-DAHN)

Qaddan is a country which is located in the northeast area of Gondwana. Its capitol is the well-known trading port of Acheron, which lies at the entrance to the Great Canal of Kha-Em on the Mediterranean Sea. The canal is named after the great Pharaoh Kha-Em-Heru, who originally proposed the plan and under whose direction the initial work was done. The reign of Kha-Em-Heru ended with his death, the canal taking almost three generations to complete. It remains today a marvel of engineering and a monument to Qaddani determination.

Most of the country's wealth is based on the trade which passes through the Great Canal. Both a tax and a toll are charged by the Qaddan government to every ship that uses the canal; the tax is based on both the type and quantity of goods being carried, and usually ranges from one to four percent of the total value of the cargo. The toll is simply a fee to use the canal, and ranges from as low as one silver piece (for small foreign vessels) to 500 G.P. (for merchant ships). Qaddani fishermen and small craft sailors use the canal for free.

The canal is heavily guarded, especially at its northern end, and small fortresses can be seen along both banks. Slaves purchased from Sheba and captive Zin tribesmen work the canal just as they did many years ago when great numbers of slaves and prisoners were used to build it. Contingents of Qaddani troops and engineers supervise all labor and maintain a strict sense of order.

The Qaddani themselves are typically of medium stature with dark brown skin and black hair and eyes. The city dwellers are commonly seen in fine apparel, and both men and women use facial and eye makeup. The priests of the state shave all body hair and dress in long robes. Most of the common folk dress in light cloaks, short tunics or kaftans, and sandals.

Qaddan has long been at war with the kingdom of Turan and the nomadic Zin tribes. The Qaddani have always considered the people of the northeast as barbaric, referring to them as "the wretched ones." Kush has kept cool but peaceful relations with Qaddan for some time, primarily because much of Kush's wealth depends solely on Qaddan's control of trade through the canal. The nation of Hesperia has a limited allegiance with Qaddan against Gorgos, whose aggressive policies have caused problems for both nations in the past. Nubia supplies Qaddan with large numbers of mercenaries, the vast majority of which are infantry used in the wars with Turan.

Qaddan's military forces are made up of several different branches, the largest of which is its well-trained infantry. Qaddan keeps only a small cavalry force, preferring to use chariots much more extensively. War elephants are also used, and are brought from Magan and Massawa through Nubia. Together these units make up a powerful war machine which has frustrated all invaders for close to 300 years.

The king (or Pharaoh) is the absolute ruler and the most important symbol in the culture of Qaddan. In essence, he is considered to be the physical manifestation of the god, Heru; a perfect being in mortal form. The Pharaoh is also the central figure of the state religion and must prove his divinity at certain festivals, where tests of strength and endurance are performed for the populace. Most of these tests have become ritualized, but some still retain their original flavor. Among these, one of the most popular is the test of virility, in which the Pharaoh must kill a full-grown bull with his bare hands.

The major belief system of Qaddan is the state religion, which worships Heru in his heavenly and earthly manifestations. There also exist numerous minor sub-cults, which worship deities and demigods related to Heru. Though all the Heru cults are based upon certain necromantic rituals (particularly mummification), most are not evil in nature. Evil necromantic cults do exist, however, despite strict state restrictions prohibiting the worship of deities other than Heru. The followers of the evil god Set, whose hidden temples are said to be located throughout Qaddan, are one such group.

The people of Qaddan are primarily farmers who work the fertile land along the River Styx. As food production is limited and the growing season short, Qaddan must import some foodstuffs from other lands in order to feed its growing population. The Qaddani are well known for their skilled craftsmen and artisans, who produce a variety of high quality trade goods. A primary export of Qaddan is finely crafted glass, such as goblets, bowls, and jewelry. Some gold is mined in the hills and shells from the coast are also used to make many items.

The capitol city of Acheron is a very wealthy trading center known for its unique architecture and the vast diversity of goods which are available in its markets. It is also home of the Acheron Library, one of the largest facilities in the world. The holy center of Heru-Seti, which lies to the southwest of Acheron, is the true home of the Pharaoh and high priesthood of Qaddan. It is a religious center of beautifully constructed pyramids and gardens. In the center of Heru-Seti is a large colonnade surrounding a small forest which hides three temples. Two of the temples are quite small, and are dedicated to the twin gods of Reason and Emotion. The third temple, which is much larger and more lavish, is dedicated to the god Heru.

Also in Heru-Seti is a temple where the priests assigned to protect and counsel the Pharaoh live. The priests maintain the beautiful gardens surrounding the holy center, which are said to be guarded by ferocious beasts. According to some, these creatures are controlled by the Pharaoh's priests, who use magical flutes to subdue or enrage the animals as needed. True or not, the priests who guard the Pharaoh are avowed fanatics who would sacrifice their lives for their ruler without question.

The deserts of Qaddan are most inhospitable, and are the subject of many tales and legends. The fabulous oasis of Giphantia (gih-

FAHN-sha) is one such legend.

There, it is said, can be found all manner of fruiting trees, magical flowers, and beautiful nymphs. Here too are said to live the *Zazir*; diminutive spirit entities who manufacture the four alchemical essences of Earth, Air, Water, and Fire.

Besides its legendary attractions, the deserts are also home to more certain dangers. The Suti, fierce caravan bandits from Turan, occasionally come here to prey on merchants and travelers. Also found are the fearsome *Ahl-at-Rab*, warlike reptile-men who ride great thunder lizards across the burning sands.

THE CITY OF ACHERON (AK-er-on)

Acheron is the capitol of Qaddan, and one of the oldest and most influential trade centers in the civilized world. Originally a stopover point for caravans traveling from Gondwana to Mediterranea, the first city of Acheron was little more than a collection of sun-baked brick huts. The building of the Kha-Em Canal (and the rise of such trading nations as Tharshesh and Sheba) brought great prosperity and growth, and established Acheron's importance as a center of trade and cultural exchange.

Modern day Acheron is notable for many things, not the least of which is the scale of its architecture. All of the city's most important structures are built of large blocks of stone, transported by slaves from quarries located to the south and southeast. Though the city has its own unmistakable style of architecture, early Atlantean influence is evident in the fairly widespread use of pyramids and concentric circle motifs.

Acheron is also notable for its universities, and for its excellent public library (considered the finest in the world). Scholars from many lands come here to study such subjects as Alchemy, Astrology, Sorcery, and Necromancy. Architects and engineers also come here to marvel at such structures as the Kha-Em Canal, the Pharos (a massive lighthouse facing the Mediterranean Sea), and the grounds of the royal palace (open to visitors only at certain times of the year). As a veritable melting pot of different cultures, Acheron places no special restrictions on foreigners (except Turanians, who must obtain passes before being allowed to enter the city), and travelers from most lands are welcome here.

For most of Acheron's resident population, life is fairly good. Most hard labor is performed by slaves, who by law may not be mistreated by their owners (the term "mistreatment" is unfortunately open to interpretation in most cases). Though many who live in and around the city are poor, commoners are not required to pay taxes, and the government takes pains to ensure that low-cost food and housing is available to all native Qaddanis. The laws of the city are few, though strictly enforced: thievery is punishable by the removal of a hand or foot, treason and public worship of any deity not associated with Heru are punishable by death. All cases are heard at the Halls of Justice. There, opposing litigants are allowed to argue their clients' cases before a high priest of Heru. All judgements are considered final, only the Pharaoh himself having the power to intercede in such decisions.

Religion plays an important part in the lives of Qaddan's citizenry, especially those who dwell within the capitol. Since the time of the First Dynasty, it has been against the law to worship any god except Heru (whose earthly manifestation is Qaddan's Pharaoh). For some time this law was strictly enforced, and individuals accused of heresy were slain out of hand. Faced with a growing multi-national population, the government of Qaddan relaxed this stricture by allowing the worship of other manifestations of Heru; i.e., deities who represent some other aspect of their all-powerful patron. Thus, Qaddanis may worship Heru as the sun god Aten, Heru as the serpent god Set, and so on. As a result of this new dictum, numerous cults pervade the city, all supposedly representing Heru in his/her infinite manifestations.

1. THE ROYAL PALACE

This fabulous complex is like a small, self-contained city. It serves as home to the Pharaoh and his family, and has its own granary, stables, temple, medical/alchemical facilities, and military contingent (400 elite soldiers, two dozen war elephants, and several dozen war chariots). Gardens and fountains dot the palace grounds, which are forbidden to non-official visitors except on certain holy days.

2. CITY FORTRESS

A fortified barracks complex complete with training, storage, and maintenance facilities. Over 2,000 infantry and half as many cavalry are stationed here, along with 20-40 heavily armed naval vessels, a division of war elephants, and two divisions of war chariots. The primary purpose of this substantial force is to patrol and guard the opening of the canal. There is a similar fortification at the canal's southern end.

3. THE PHAROS

This lighthouse, which is some 450 feet in height, was built to guide ships safely into the main harbor and the canal. Its light is produced by a special lamp whose flame is reflected by means of a complex mechanism of polished crystals and mirrors. The Pharos is never left untended, and is always heavily guarded.

4. THE CANAL OF KHA-EM

Perhaps Qaddan's greatest architectural achievement, the canal measures nearly ten miles in length. It is wide enough to accommodate even the largest merchant and naval vessels. Foreign ships must pay the appropriate tariffs at the Bondmaster's Offices before being allowed to enter the waterway.

5. BONDMASTER'S OFFICES

All foreign vessels wishing to use the canal must first dock here, undergo a brief inspection, and pay such tariffs as the Bondmaster levies. Once all such duties have been performed to the Bondmaster's satisfaction, papers will be issued allowing passage through the canal. No foreign vessel may enter the canal without such papers; ships not in compliance with this stricture will be boarded by Qaddani naval forces. Their cargoes will be confiscated, and their crews imprisoned in an adjacent dungeon facility or sold into slavery. Facilities similar to this one can also be found at the southern entrance to the canal.

6. PARK OF THE ATEN (SUN)

A spacious park facility, the central feature of which is the "Arena of the Gods." Races and other sporting events are held here for the enjoyment of the general populace (admission for commoner's seating costs a single silver piece; canopied seats and private booths cost from 20-200 G.P.). Religious rituals involving the Pharaoh are sometimes performed in the arena, which seats approximately 20,000.

7. TEMPLE OF HERU
The largest temple in the city, dedicated to Qaddan's supreme patron deity. More than 100 priests and acolytes live and study here.

8. THE LIBRARY AT ACHERON
A massive edifice renowned throughout the civilized world for its superior facilities (double all chance-of-success die rolls for any type of research undertaken here). Citizens of the state may use the library without having to pay the customary 10 G.P. per day fee.

9. ACHERON UNIVERSITY
A sprawling complex with separate facilities for the study of engineering, history, geography, alchemy, magic, the arts, and foreign cultures. A military training facility (open only to Qaddani citizens) and a center for theological studies (the Temple of Serad and Sesha, gods of knowledge and wisdom) are also located on the grounds. Tuition is 100 G.P. per month for non-Qaddanis, 10 G.P. per month for citizens of the state.

10. CITY GRANARIES
Here great quantities of staple grains are stored, and rationed to citizens at very low cost. The facilities are well-guarded.

11. THE GRAND MARKETPLACE
The main outlet for the incredible variety of goods brought to Qaddan from other lands. Hundreds of vendors come to this bustling marketplace, offering such goods as imported produce, silks and spices from the east, amber from the northlands, gold and ivory from Ophir, slaves from Sheba, and much more. Prices vary widely.

12. THE HALLS OF JUSTICE
All legal disputes are settled here, presided over by one of the city's many high priests of Heru. Facilities for the detainment of accused felons are located below ground, and are said to be most unpleasant. Executions and other violent forms of punishment are administered at dawn in the public square.

13. PUBLIC SQUARE
Government proclamations, important announcements, and all public executions and dismemberments are performed here. A high priest of Heru must be present for any such event to be considered "official."

14. THE PUBLIC BATHS
These houses of lavation are open to all at little expense (1 C.P. for citizens, 1 S.P. for non-citizens). The baths are almost always crowded with commoners and travelers, many of whom come here simply to catch up on the latest gossip.

15. FOUNTAINS OF THE MOON
The only remaining structures associated with an ancient temple dedicated to some obscure lunar deity. The temple was torn down soon after the First Dynasty outlawed all cults not related to the god Heru.

16. SHRINE OF THE SERPENT CULT
The priests of this temple revere a most unusual manifestation of Heru, as the evil serpentine entity known as Set. Though technically within the law, the sect is shunned by most followers of Heru, and meets only in secret.

17. TEMPLE OF ISA
This temple is dedicated to Heru as he is manifested by Isa, goddess of healing and birth. Only females may become priestesses of Isa, who is revered for her kindness and mercy.

18. TA-NEN THEATRE
Musical performances and plays are often performed in this amphitheatre, which seats approximately 5,000. Price of admission is generally 10-40 G.P., too extravagant for most commoners.

19. PALACE OF DELIGHTS
A house of courtesans which caters to a very wealthy clientele (prices are about ten times standard rates). This establishment is said to be a favorite with visiting foreigners of high standing, such as nobles, rich merchants, etc.

20. ACHERON ZOO
A large and well-kept facility which features unusual creatures from many exotic locales. Admission is 5 C.P. for citizens, and 1 G.P. for foreign visitors.

21. BLACKSMITH/STABLES
Much used by travelers, this facility offers good service at standard prices. Horses and camels can be bought or sold here as well.

22. THE WEST INN
An establishment which caters to the upper class and specializes in Atlantean/Mediterranean cuisine. The inn also has its own stables, smithy, laundry, and tailor shop. Prices are about two times standard rates, and quality is generally quite good.

23. EMBALMER
One of the city's only non-cult embalming centers. Costs range from 100-10,000 G.P., depending on how extravagant a burial one desires (prices are based on the type and quality of coffin or sarcophagus desired).

24. PAN PO' HOUSE
An inn specializing in far eastern cuisine and decor. Many travelers and merchants from eastern lands frequent this place. Prices are about average, and quality is good.

25. THE PHAROS TAVERN
A waterfront establishment frequented by sailors, seafarers, and local citizens. Quality and prices are about ave rage. Fights are not uncommon.

26. THE GUARDIAN
A tavern frequented primarily by soldiers from the city's garrisons and some local citizens. The owner is a retired captain of the Qaddani infantry and a veteran of several campaigns vs. the Turanians (Turanians, in fact, are not welcome here). Prices are ten percent below standard rates, and quality is generally good. Fights are common, especially on soldiers' paydays.

27. KONSU BOARDING HOUSE
An inn which offers short or long term lodging at 50 percent below standard rates. Services are generally of poor quality, though the food is said to be fairly good. Travelers wishing to save money often stay here.

28. HOUSE OF RABIAN
A tavern frequented by a wide range of individuals, from travelers to citizens. Prices are 25 percent below standard rates, and quality is average at best.

29. ACHERON EMBALMING SUPPLY
This establishment stocks all sorts of embalming materials, from linen gauze to fragrant oils and preservative resins. Coffins made to order on the premises (10-1,000 G.P.), as are sarcophagi (1,000-8,000 + G.P.).

30. KALCHANKA TAVERN
A tavern and inn of low quality. The tavern's low prices attract a fairly rough clientele, including freed slaves, mercenary fighters, adventurers, and some commoners.

31. ALCHEMIST
A small shop with laboratory facilities in the rear. The owner sells only prepared mixtures (no ingredients), and will purchase raw materials

(herbs, plants, etc.) for one-half standard rates. Prices are about average, but stock is limited (10-40 percent chance that the proprietor will be out of any desired mixture).

32. GLASS WORKER
Excellent quality and specially made items are available here for about two times standard rates. The owners also do some export business with Tartessos, and are quite wealthy.

33. TANNER
This shop sells leather goods, hides, and furs, most of which come from the southern Gondwanan jungles. Prices are about 50 percent above standard rates, but quality is always very good. The owner will purchase raw hides and furs for 1-100 G.P. (more if the animal/creature is extremely rare).

34. CHANDLER
This shop offers tallows, candles, and soaps at average prices. Sealing wax is also available for 1 S.P. per pound.

35. METALSMITH
This large establishment makes and sells metal wares of all sorts, from tools to weapons, shields and armor. Long a supplier to the Qaddani military, the proprietor has an excellent reputation, and produces fine quality goods for average prices. Special and custom made goods are available at two times standard rates.

36. PERFUMERY
Imported and domestic scents and fragrant oils are available here at 25 percent above standard rates.

37. LIMNER/SCRIBE
This establishment produces some of the best work in the city. Manuscripts copied and illuminated at very reasonable costs (2 G.P. per page of writings, 10 G.P. per illustration).

38. RUGMAKER
Excellent quality wares and imports at prices ranging from 1-20+ G.P. per square foot. Customers are treated to tea and biscuits while they peruse the shop's wares.

39. CLOTHIER
The finest establishment of its kind in the city. Prices are quite extravagant (five to ten times standard rates), but quality is superior. Custom made goods are available at no additional cost, and all tailoring is performed free of charge. This shop is frequented by many of Acheron's wealthiest nobles and merchants.

40. APOTHECARY
A supplier of herbal remedies and elixirs. Prices are two times standard rates, and unprepared herbs are also bought and sold here.

41. CARTOGRAPHER
The owner of this shop, an Atlantean by birth, has had many years' experience at sea. His maps are considered to be of fine quality, and range in price from 2-200 G.P. A skilled scribe, he also copies simple (1-10 page) documents in order to make ends meet (cost is generally 15 S.P. per page).

42. LITIGANT
This office specializes in legal matters involving trade licenses, imports and exports. Rates are 20+ G.P. per day plus expenses.

43. MERCANTILER
This large and respected establishment deals in import and export goods of all sorts, specializing in odd furnishings, textiles, and curios. Prices are generally two to three times standard rates.

44. ARCHITECT/ENGINEER
An old and highly respected establishment dealing in most types of construction. The owners supply all masons and slave labor at two times standard costs.

45. SHIPYARD
All types of sail and oar-driven craft may be brought here for repair, maintenance, or overhaul. Prices are about average (based on percent of damage done to vessel as compared to its worth).

46. MASTER SHIP BUILDER
Another old and highly regarded establishment. Ships of all sorts designed and built on the premises, with some used vessels generally available for sale. Prices are approximately 50 percent above standard rates for all custom-designed vessels.

47. WOODCARVER
This establishment specializes in custom goods such as ship's furnishings, mastheads, and so on. Prices are average, and the quality of workmanship is very good.

48. SEAFARER SUPPLY
A warehouse/shop complex which carries most maritime supplies, including sails, rope, chests, barrels, etc. Prices are average, and quality is generally good.

49. POTTER
A simple establishment dealing in a variety of ceramic goods, including urns, vases, tiles, and all sorts of pottery. Prices are ten percent above standard rates, and quality is excellent. Custom work available at two times standard rates.

50. LOCKSMITH
This small shop specializes in heavy locks, such as are used to bar fortress doors and gates. Smaller locks are also available. Prices range from 1 S.P. to 500+ G.P., and quality is good.

51. THE SORCERERS' MARKET
This outdoor bazaar is frequented by spell casters of many professions, and consists of a number of small shops and stands. Many types of magical supplies and ingredients are available here, most at about two times standard prices. The market is also frequented by peddlers and nomads, certain of whom are said to be less than reputable in their dealings.

52. SOOTHSAYER
An old crone who claims to be a mystic (many believe her to be a witch) operates this small shop. Her predictions are said to be most accurate, if somewhat expensive (10-40 G.P., depending on what kind of mood she is in).

53. SAGE
A scholar specializing in ancient languages, obscure scripts, and magical tomes. For a fee of 10-100 G.P. he will examine any written materials and appraise their worth and/or authenticity. He will also buy books and scrolls, but will generally offer no more than standard prices for such materials.

54. MYSTIC
A healer from the far east who speaks very little of the Qaddani tongue (he claims to be Khitan by birth). His fees are quite modest (approximately 1 G.P. per hit point restored, 5-20 G.P. for any other type of minor cure) and he is said to be most effective.

55. DARDANUS REGENT'S OFFICE
Here aspiring spell casters may apply for acceptance at the famed Magical Institute of Dardanus (see: *Dardanus*). A 10 G.P. fee must be submitted, after which the applicant will be required to answer questions concerning his or her training, background, and future goals. A waiting period of two to eight weeks is customary before any response from Dardanus can be received.

56. ALCHEMISTS' GUILD

An immense structure housing teaching, residency and lab facilities. Membership is 500 G.P. per year, and tuition is 100 G.P. per month. Lab space and most common ingredients are available to members only at ten percent above standard rates. The Guild also has a registry for members seeking employment in the private sector.

57. SORCERERS' GUILD

The only guild house in the known world which caters exclusively to practitioners of sorcery. Membership is 1,000 G.P. per annum, which includes registry and the use of laboratory facilities only (instruction and material components are not available on the premises).

58. ACHERON INSTITUTE OF ASTROLOGY

A government-funded institute for the study and practice of astrology. Only worshippers of Heru (in his manifestation as sun or sky deity) may apply. Tuition is 50 G.P. per month. The Institute's library is available to all students and alumni at no cost, and its facilities are considered adequate. Alumni may also join the Astrologers' Guild (membership: 200 G.P. per year), which offers a registry service and meets weekly on the premises.

59. ALCHEMICAL SUPPLY

The owner of this establishment deals in all types of alchemical equipment and ingredients, and has a substantial import/export business with Tartessos and Sheba. Prices are about two times standard rates. Prepared mixtures are not available here. The owner will purchase raw materials and ingredients of good quality, but will not sell or buy small quantities (1 oz. minimum).

60. THE SILVER PENTACLE

An inn and tavern frequented by spell casters, alchemists, and scholars. The atmosphere is quiet, and conducive to contemplation (noisy revelers are quickly dispatched by the owner's six burly slaves). Prices are ten percent above standard rates, and the quality of the service is good. A number of odd curios and relics decorate the main dining hall.

61. LINGUIST/SCRIBE

Documents copied (4 G.P. per page) or translated (10 G.P. per page) on the premises. Instruction in Khitan, Dravidian, and Gondwanan is available at a cost of 20 G.P. per month. The owner is an avid bibliophile who collects ancient scrolls and tablets.

62. PARK OF MONUMENTS

A large and spacious park decorated with hanging gardens, fountains, and statues of Heru, past Pharaohs, and other notables. Considered unsafe at night despite frequent city guard patrols.

63. THE BLACK SKULL

A tavern which caters to some of the worst elements of Acheron society, The Black Skull is open only during the late evening hours. Witches, black magicians and necromancers are said to frequent this place on occasion. Prices are average, as is the quality of the food and drink. Some claim that dealers in contraband and stolen goods operate out of a secret room hidden somewhere in or below the building; others say the tavern is simply a front for a cult of demon or devil worshippers.

64. TEMPLE OF ANU

A small temple dedicated to the god Anu, who is considered a manifestation of Heru as master of the after-life. The cult is necromantic in nature, embalms its dead, and reveres the image of Anu as a sahu (mummy).

65. TRADESMEN'S GUILDS

In this sector are found the simple guild houses of Acheron's tradesmen, such as the salters, charcoalers, brick masons, millers, masons, carpenters, etc.

66. SILVER/GOLD SMITH

A small establishment which deals in all sorts of silver and gold jewelry. Prices are average, and quality is good. The proprietors will buy raw metals, and will do custom work for two times standard rates plus ten percent.

67. LAPIDARY

This establishment deals in the sale, purchase, appraisal, and import/export of all types of precious and semi-precious stones. Prices are two to three times standard rates, but quality and selection are unexcelled in the city.

68. CLOTHIER

This establishment specializes in Mediterranean and Atlantean style apparel. Prices are two times standard rates, and quality is good.

69. MERCANTILER

A dealer in copper and brass goods, from utensils to jewelry and decorative items of all sorts. The proprietors will buy copper or brass items from other lands if they are of good quality. Prices are 20 percent above standard rates, and quality is good.

70. LITIGANT

General practice, handling most types of legal matters. Fees range from 1-12 G.P. per day.

71. LITIGANT

Specializing in criminal cases of all sorts. Fees start at 5 S.P. per day and go as high as 100 G.P. per day (for the best legal advisors in the firm).

72. CHARIOT-MAKER

All types of two and four-wheeled conveyances are available here, at two times standard rates. Quality of all items sold here is very good.

73. CAMEL TRADER

Camels and some horses for sale at standard prices. Quality varies.

74. ANIMAL TRAINER

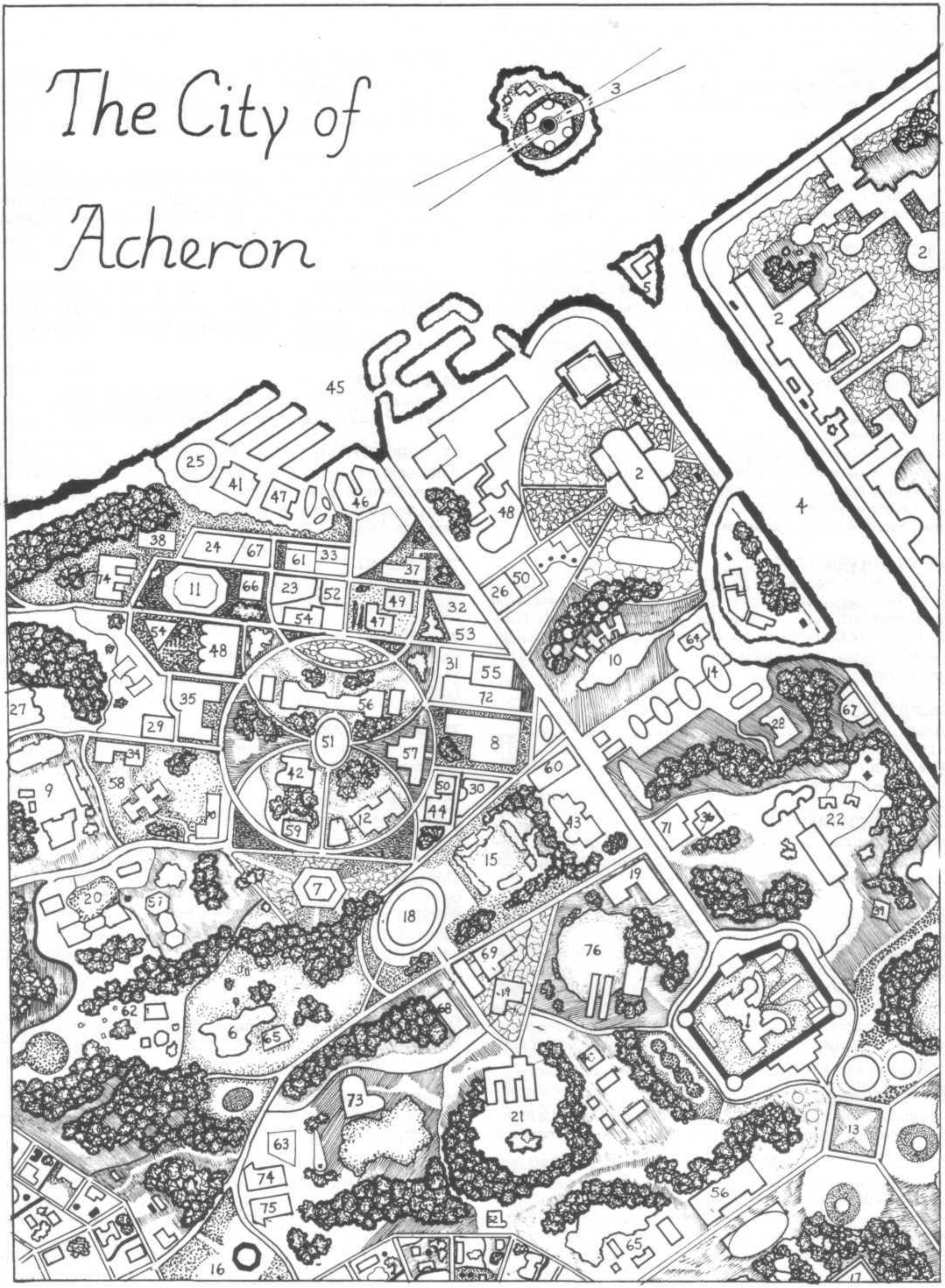
This establishment deals in trained animals of many types, including hawks, falcons, parrots, dogs, ocelots, and some exotic types. Prices are quite high (200 + G.P. per level of the desired creature), but satisfaction is guaranteed. It is also possible to bring animals here to be trained (cost: about 75 percent of the purchase price for a similar, already-trained animal).

75. LIVESTOCK

Many types of domestic animals are available here, including fowl, cows, goats, pigs, riding horses, draft horses, oxen, and camels. Prices are average, and quality varies.

76. HORSE TRADER

The finest stallions and warhorses are available here for two to five times standard prices.


The City of Acheron
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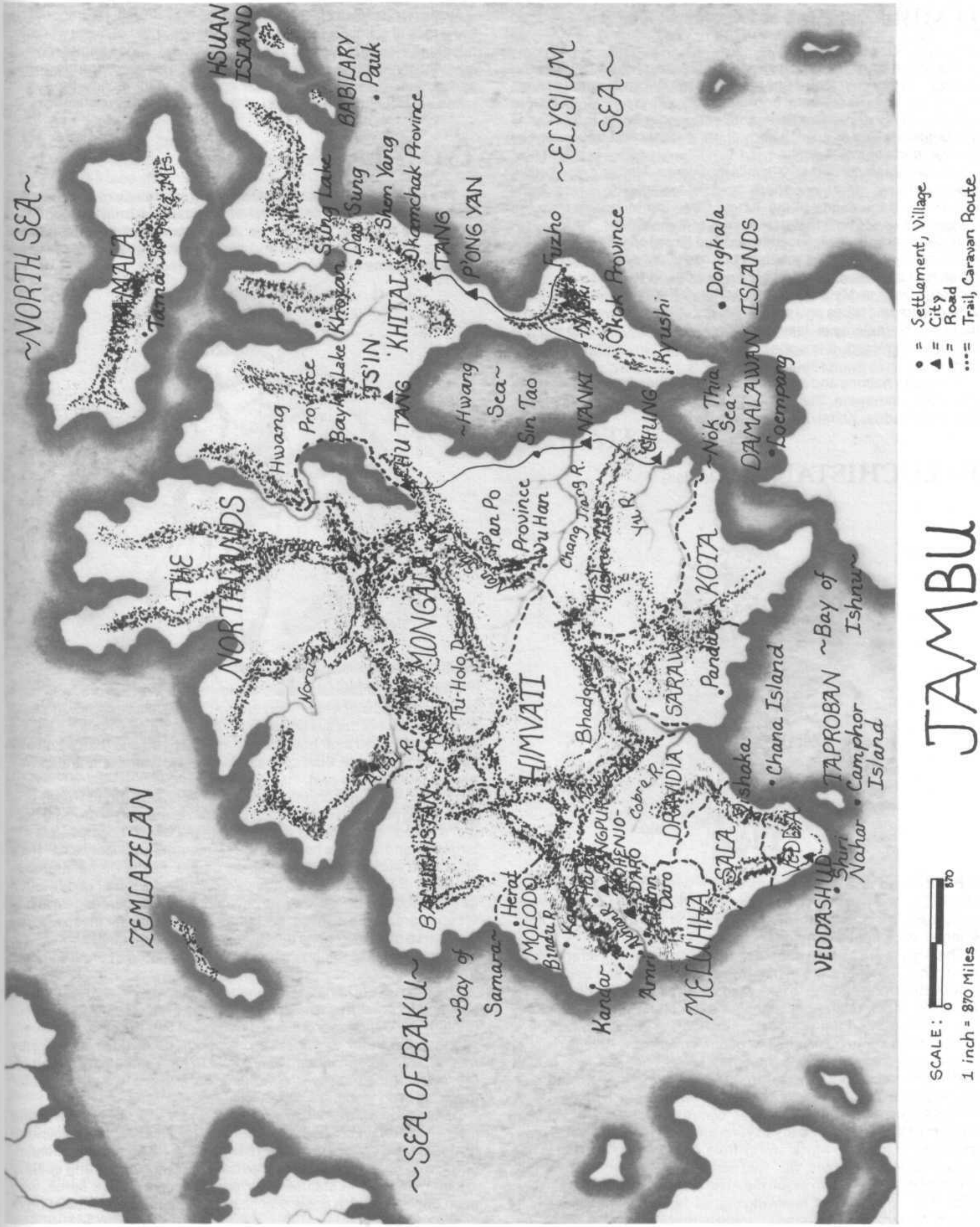
~NORTH SEA~
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BABILARY
Pauk
Tamo
MALA
THE NORTHLANDS
Hwang Province
Bayan Lake
Sung Lake
Khotan
Dao Sung
Shon Yang
Okamchak Province
TS'IN
KHITAI
TANG
P'ONG YAN
~ELYSIUM SEA~
Fuzho
Okok Province
Kyushi
Dongkala
DAMALAWAN ISLANDS
Loempang
~Nok Thia Sea~
~Hwang Sea~
Sin Tao
NANKI
CHUNG
HU TANG
Nora R.
Tu-Holo D.
MONGAL
Pan Po Province
Wu Han
Chang Jiang R.
Yu R.
KOTA
Panda
SARAVA
Bhadga
HIMVATI
Attar R.
BALUCHISTAN
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Bindu R.
Kandar
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NGPUR
MOHENJO-DARO
Cobra R.
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MELUHHA
SALA
VEDDA
Ishaka
Chana Island
TAPROBAN
Camphor Island
~Bay of Ishnu~
VEDDASHUD
Shiri Nahar
~SEA OF BAKU~
~Bay of Samara~
JAMBU
SCALE:
0
870
1 inch = 870 Miles
• = Settlement, Village
▲ = City
— = Road
••• = Trail, Caravan Route

JAMBU (jam-BU)

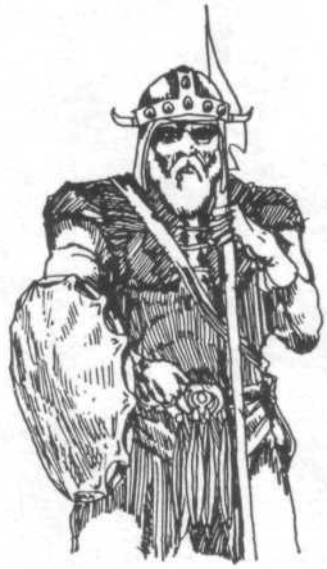
The continent of Jambu is a vast land mass surrounded by water on all sides. Its northern coast stretches into the frozen expanses of the North Sea, while its southern and eastern shores are met by the warm waters of the Erythraen and Elysium Seas, respectively. To the west is the temperate Sea of Baku, a body of water most often frequented by Sheban trade ships.

The geography of Jambu is similarly diverse. Almost every known type of terrain is represented here, from the towering Kaila mountains of Himvati to the sands of the Tuholo Desert in Mongala; from the steamy jungles of Kota to the icy tundra of Tamala.

Though Jambu is home to the great and fabled civilization of Khitai, much of the continent is inhabited by relatively primitive folk. Few other countries have settlements large enough to qualify as cities, Mohenjo-Daro in Meluhha being perhaps the most notable. Elsewhere, nomadic tribes and a variety of agrarian and hunting cultures make up the majority of Jambu's population. Many sizeable regions remain unexplored, unmapped, and shrouded in mystery and legend.

The major nations and areas of Jambu are: Tamala, Mongala, Himvati, Kota, Damawala, Sarawa, Sala, Dravidia, Molodo, Baluchistan, Meluhha, Vedda, Khitai, and The Northlands.

BALUCHISTAN (ba-LU-kis-tan)



Baluchistan is a mountainous region which lies to the north of Molodo, on the western coast of Jambu. The region is only sparsely populated, but is well-known as the home of a warlike race of light-skinned, dark-haired nomads known as the Aryans.

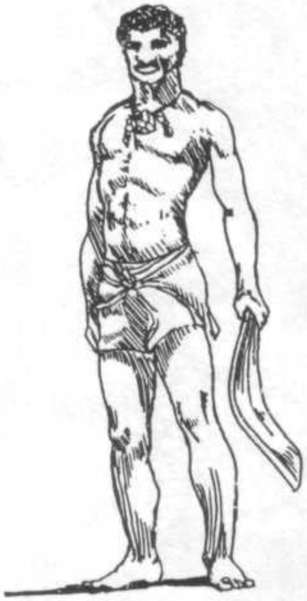
The Aryans are a fierce people who will usually attack strangers on sight. They honor bravery in battle above all things, and believe that only those strong enough to take what they need are worthy of life. As such, the tribes often fight amongst each other, and occasionally engage in raids on the villages of neighboring lands. Cowardice is considered a crime punishable by death; conversely, Aryans respect courageous foes, and will sometimes spare enemies who exhibit great valor in combat. Their warriors wear crude leather and hide armor, and use spears, clubs and short bows of horn in battle.

The Aryans live in small villages comprised of felt and wooden frame huts known as *yurts*. Aryan yurts are often mounted on ox carts, allowing the tribes to move swiftly from one place to another. They have domesticated goats, yak, wild horses (used in battle) and a species of wooly camel (from which the Aryans derive the felt used in their huts). They are animists, believing that all creatures and things have a spirit. Many of their shamans dabble in Black Magic.

To the north of Baluchistan and beyond the Altai (all-TIE) mountains live a race of primitive humans. They know nothing of metal working, but dress in rude hides and use only the crudest stone implements. It is said that they have no language, and communicate through grunts and guttural noises. Despite their apparent vulnerability, the Aryan tribes will not attack them, though the reason for this is unknown.

DAMALAWA (da-ma-LA-wa)

The nation of Damalawa is actually a confederacy of small islands located off the southern coast of Kota and ranging from the North Sea to the Bay of Ishnu. The position of this island chain (situated in the trade lanes between eastern and western Jambu) has allowed Damalawa to become an important factor in this region.



The people of Damalawa are somewhat short in stature, with dark brown skin and black hair. They are a primitive folk who know nothing of metal working, but are skilled in the building of small-medium sized sailing craft. Even their huts (constructed of wood and thatch and elevated on poles) are built to resemble boats, with the entranceway always facing to the east.

The two most important islands are Dongkala (dong-KA-la) and Loempang (lom-PANG). Dongkala is home to the king of the boat people, a hereditary monarch who keeps many wives. Loempang is the largest island, and it is here that the Damalawans collect "tolls" from ships who wish to pass through their waters. As the Damalawans do not value gold or gemstones, they will only accept barter goods (such as metal tools and weapons) as payment for passage. Refusal to pay is considered a grave insult, and ships will be sent after those who fail to observe this custom. As the Damalawans can be quite aggressive, even the powerful Khitans usually pay such tariffs in order to avoid trouble.

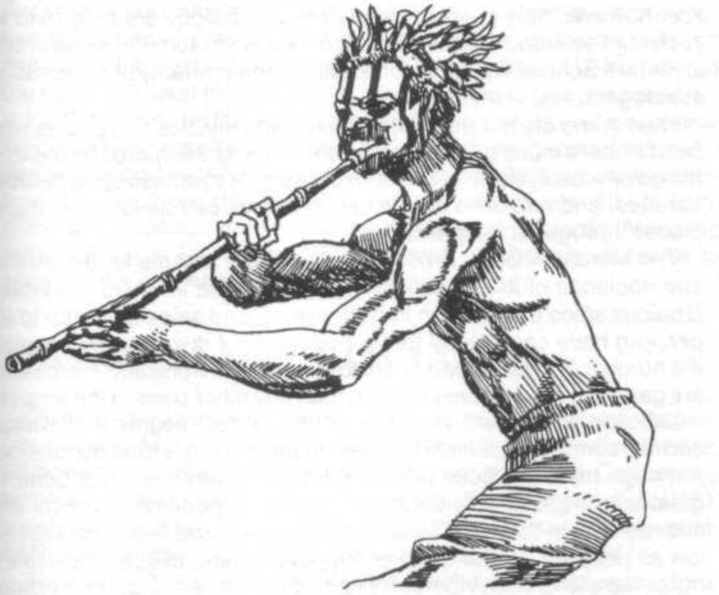
The religion of Damalawa is animistic in nature. They worship the sea, and all creatures who dwell within it are accorded great respect (though the Damalawans subsist mainly on fish,they make frequent sacrifices in order to appease the hundreds of gods whom they revere). Damalawan shamans are held in high esteem by their people, both for their ability to communicate with the sea gods and for their skill in concocting a variety of herbal mixtures.

Damalawan warriors use no armor or shields in battle, trusting instead to certain charms and fetishes (usually of woven plants and grasses, worn about the neck). Their favorite weapons are warclubs, bows (with poisoned or flaming arrows), throwing sticks and spears. Though smallish in stature, they are considered quite fierce, and often engage in such grisly practices as the torture and mutilation of captured foes.

It is not uncommon in Damalawan society for a male to have several wives; the more wives a man has, the greater is his esteem in the village. A favorite pastime of most Damalawans is the chewing of betel-nut, a practice which eventually stains and blackens the teeth; it is a Damalawan saying that "black teeth are what distinguishes man from beast."

DRAVIDIA (dra-VID-ee-a)

Dravidia is a land of dense jungle located in the northeastern region of the Salwah sub-continent (the name Dravidia is very old, and in many places is used to describe the entire southwestern part of Jambu). Almost nothing is known of this area, which is said to be fraught with dangers of many sorts.



A fierce race of dark-skinned people, the Dravidians, dwell in these jungles. Their villages are said to be hidden so that intruders will not find them, and protected from trespassers by camouflaged pits and snares. Travelers in this region confirm the aggressive nature of these tribes, who will purportedly attack outsiders without cause. They use blowguns, spears, and clubs in battle, and will often track and pursue those who flee from them.

The Dravidians are said to be very superstitious, putting much faith in charms, fetishes and talismans of all sorts. Their shamans wear necklaces of human teeth and bones, and are skilled in the arts of herb lore and image magic.

Whether because of superstition or some certain knowledge, no Dravidian will set foot in the area known as the *Black Jungle. Here*, it is said, are found such fell creatures of the night as *Rakshasa* (shape-changers), *Pisacas* (vampires), and *Hantu* (earth-bound demons). According to the tales of bold travelers, the Dravidians call this jungle "the most evil place on earth."

FRISLANDIA (fris-LAN-dee-a)

Frislandia is the smallest of the three large isles of the North Sea, but it is home to a civilization of great interest. It is located in the center of the North Sea, far from any other land. A rocky, mountainous island, Frislandia is covered by snow all year round. The island is home to a kingdom of reclusive dwarves, who claim Frislandia to be the birthplace of their hardy race. (Other branches of the race dispute this, however.) Legend has it that the dwarves are descended from Elemental Earth Gnomes who lived in Frislandia before the dawn of time. But the dwarves of Frislandia have little contact with other races, being intolerant and wary of strangers, so no proof for their claims has ever been shown to outsiders.

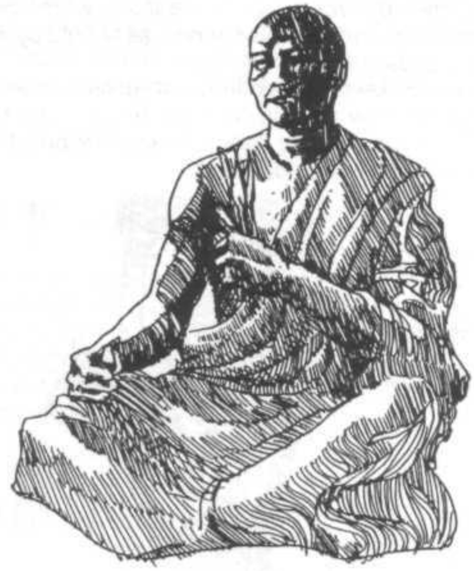
Hyperborean dwarves do sometimes travel to Frislandia, bringing back descriptions that may be exaggerated traveler's tales, but are probably at least partially true. They describe it as a frigid land, a place of perpetual ice and snow where the only animal life above the ground are seals, walrus, polar bears, and other arctic beasts. The dwarves hunt these animals, but subsist mainly on fish and crustaceans.

A single mountain, called Frostmark by the locals, towers above the rocky shores of the island's western coast. The dwarves live here in a great underground fortress/city filled with great halls and natural chambers, winding corridors, and comfortable living quarters kept warm by huge coal-burning furnaces. Frostmark is said to be impregnable to attack.

Like most of their kind, the dwarves of Frislandia are expert miners, artificers, armorers, and craftsmen. They are known far and wide as *The Splendid Dwarves of the Twilight*, and are said to be the richest civilization in the known world. The subterranean vaults in Frostmark's depths are said to bulge with gems and precious metals.

The dwarves themselves are reputed to be mighty warriors, quite without fear. Songs and poems have been written about their battles with Jotun raiders, the giants whose dragon ships plunder the coasts all around the North Sea. Such tales are well known to dwarves from Hyperborea to Tharshesh.

HIMVATI (him-VA-tee)



High at the roof of the world in the Kaila (ka-EE-la) mountains lies Himvati, a land of mystery and mysticism. Here amidst the snow-covered mountains and plateaus live three different cultures: the Xinjang (ZIN-jang), the Kazaks (KA-zaks), and the Himvati. All three peoples bear a strong resemblance to the Khitans. The Xinjang live to the northwest, and herd goats and sheep on the Kaila plateau. During the short summer months they grow some rice and cotton, but by and large they are a poor people. The Xinjang trade wool and hides with the Himvati, receiving metal tools, foodstuffs and other essential items in return. Aside from this occasional contact, they are a shy and reclusive folk who keep very much to themselves.

The Kazaks live along the southern borders of the Tu-Holo Desert. They are skilled horsemen, fond of strong drink, wrestling, and games of chance. In many ways their culture is similar to the Mongalans, though the Kazaks are considerably more aggressive; they often raid Xinjang and even Himvati settlements. Their favorite weapons are the short bow and a type of curved throwing knife. Unlike the Xinjang, the Kazaks do not enjoy friendly relations with the Himvati.

The Himvati live along the foothills of the Kaila mountains. They consider themselves the ruling class of the land, and have little regard for the Xinjang or Kazaks (who, they feel, are simple and barbaric peoples). The city of Bhadgoan (bod-GO-an) is their capital, and is notable for its many monasteries Martial artists and monks of several mystic cults are trained in these places, most of which are inaccessible to the general populace.

The official religion of Himvati is a mystical doctrine which embraces the principles of reincarnation and the spirit realms. No being is more venerated than *The Da'al* (da-AHL), the ruler of Himvati, considered to be an incarnating god. A group of 333 monks and mystics carries out his divine edicts, and acts as Himvati's governing body. There is much secrecy and mystery associated with the Da'al and his followers, and no Himvati would dare question what goes on in their shrines and temples.

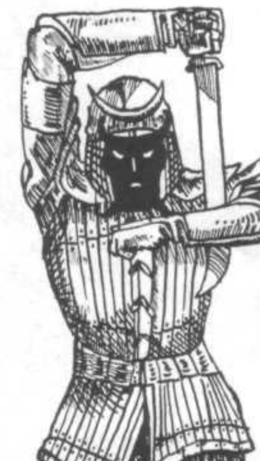
Himvati has a small army, which is employed primarily to ward off Kazak raids and to secure the country's eastern border with Khitai. Their warriors wear iron helms (with fur ear and neck flaps), metal or horn lamellar surcoats, and fur leggings. They use iron-shod spears and heavy, hacking blades in combat, and are considered good fighters.

The Himvati people are said to treat strangers in friendly and hospitable fashion, greeting visitors graciously and with protruding tongue (a sign of friendship). Nonetheless, they are retiring and secretive when it comes to their religious beliefs, which they will not discuss with non-Himvati.

There is a legend amongst the Himvati describing a hidden land, known as Shamballa (shom-ba-LA). According to the stories, Shamballa is built in the shape of an eight-petalled lotus, with each petal designating a separate principality. Here are found enchanted gardens, magical fountains, and glorious shrines, all tended by mystics and monks of the highest order.

Encircling the city and keeping it hidden from outsiders are the towering peaks known as "the mountains of the moon." The Himvati claim that Shamballa is an earthly paradise, and that only those of good heart are able to find this hidden land.

KHITAI (kih-TIE)



Khitai is the largest and most powerful nation on the continent of Jambu. It is composed of four separate provinces: Okok (oh-KUK) to the southeast, Pan P'o (pan-PO) to the southwest, Hwang (hu-WANG) to the northwest, and Okamchak (oh-kam-CHOK) to the northeast.

According to legend, the whole of Khitai was once believed to be covered with jungle and ruled by large and fearsome beasts. It was the valiant kings of ancient times who drove out the monsters and consecrated the Land of the Yellow Earth (as this region was once known).

The emperor of modern day Khitai is a direct descendant of these first kings, and, amongst his people, is considered a demi-god. Though conquered in the First Age by Atlantis, Khitai regained its independence soon after the Great Cataclysm. Combining what they could cull from the Atlanteans with their own traditions and lore, the Khitans (KE-tans) rebuilt their society and soon began to flourish.

The present culture, though based to a great extent on agriculture, is as advanced in the arts and sciences as any of the western lands. Khitai's military is also highly regarded, particularly its immense and well-equipped army.

Khitan society is divided into seven classes, or grades. Below the emperor are the Mandarins, who make up Khitai's nobility and ruling class. One must generally be born into this class, though an exceptional warrior or scholar may occasionally gain acceptance in this rank through his or her accomplishments.

As Khitans have a great regard for martial prowess, warriors are technically accorded a status second only to the Mandarins. In practice, however, only great commanders and heroes are truly held in such high esteem. A higher degree of respect is sometimes awarded to Khitai's Scholar Class, which is composed primarily of alchemists, astrologers, and sorcerors.

Next in line are the *Bonzes*, the holy men, mystics and priests who head Khitai's many religious sects and cults. Unrestricted by the Khitan government, some of the Bonzes are able to amass considerable fortunes, and elaborate shrines and temples can be found in many places throughout the provinces.

The Merchant Class is perhaps even more notable for the wealth and opulence of its members (especially those involved in Khitai's fabulous spice trade). High import, export, and sales taxes (up to 25 percent) have contributed to the exclusivity of this class by keeping the number of small shopowners to a minimum. Ironically, merchants are generally held in lower esteem than any other class in the empire.

Laborers and peasants make up the largest segment of Khitan society, comprising over 80 percent of the country's total population. Although most are quite poor, the Khitan government has gone to great lengths to ensure their loyalty and cooperation. Farmers are allowed to own their own land in many cases, and taxes are kept as low as possible. Under the present government, the common folk's rights have long been vigorously upheld (a rarity amongst most countries of the Second Age).

Khitan justice is similarly fair, if somewhat harsh; individuals accused of any crime are held in confinement, but are generally not mistreated in any fashion. A jury of government officials presides over the trial of the accused, and allows the defendant every possible chance to prove his or her innocence. If found to be innocent, the court will usually attempt to make amends to the victim in some way. Punishment for offenses varies according to the type of crime committed. Beatings (performed with a flat bamboo stick) are the most common form of punishment, the number of strokes being determined by the seriousness of the offense. Thieves are often made to wear a heavy wooden yoke (fastened about the neck) for periods ranging from one week to as long as three months. Convicted murderers are sentenced to death by strangulation or (if the crime was truly heinous) decapitation. The most serious offense is a crime against the emperor, which brings with it the punishment known as *kiao* ("the death of ten thousand deaths"). The guilty party is staked to the ground, skinned alive, and then slowly cut into pieces.

Khitai has a powerful military that is easily the class of the continent. The Khitan navy consists of over 2,000 vessels, many armed with catapult and/or ballista. While the navy's ability to navigate over long stretches of open sea is questionable, the ability of Khitai's naval commanders to protect and patrol the nation's coasts is not.

The Khitan army is held in even higher esteem, and is easily the largest land force in the world. The Khitan heavy infantry (plate mail, halberd, and short sword), elite heavy cavalry (plate mail, lance and sword) and archers (leather armor, short bow, and short sword), are considered the best units, followed by the Khitan artillerists (light and heavy catapults), elephant cavalry, light cavalry, and light infantry. Khitan officers and members of the elite units often wear hideous leather or iron masks, both for protection and to strike fear into the hearts of their adversaries.

The people of Khitai are generally somewhat short of stature, with sallow skins and almond-shaped eyes. Both men and women wear their hair long, and often in the most elaborate styles. The wealthy dress in silks; those not so fortunate wear simple smocks, tunics, and/or trousers of light cotton cloth.

THE PROVINCES OF KHITAI

HWANG PROVINCE

Hwang province is known primarily for its two cities, Ts'in (tis-IN) and Chu Tang (ku-TANG). Ts'in is an agricultural center which produces much of Khitai's rice, millet, and wheat. Larger and more opulent is the city of Chu Tang, where iron, copper, gold and jade are mined. To the west of Chu Tang are the deep Gorges of Chu Tang; to the north is Baykal (by-KAL) Lake, which is said to be bottomless.

Further north and to the northwest are great forests and mountains. Spice traders come here to gather precious ginseng roots despite the dangers posed by tribes of ogres and wild mountain folk. Mandarins from the southern districts also come here occasionally to hunt pheasant, wildcats, and (in the mountains) snow leopards. Along the Hwang River is Tai Yen (tie-YEN), a small outpost which serves to keep hostile Tammans from venturing down river.

OKAMCHAK PROVINCE

Okamchak is the ruling province of Khitai, and the site of the capital city of Tang. Much of the empire's military power is centered here, along with many of Khitai's wealthiest Mandarin families. Copper and some iron are mined close to the town of Dao Sung (dao-SUNG), which houses a large military training center. At Shem Yang (shem-YANG) tea is grown, and fine cloth and paper are produced.

The city of P'ong Yan (pong-YAN) is a well-known fishing and trading port which exports northern taro root and ginseng to the capital. To the northeast are the hunting tribes who bring horses, goats, venison, and furs to Tang. Jade from the rich mining outpost of Khoyan (in the Kunlun mountain range) also finds its way here, brought by heavily armed caravans traveling from Chu Tang.

OKOK PROVINCE

The people of Okok are known as superior craftsmen, hard-working fishermen, and fierce warriors. Most of their towns and villages lie along the coast, for the interior is still largely wilderness and the mountains are said to be inhabited by wild tribes of men.

The towns of Nyoki (ne-YO-kee) and Kyushi (ke-YU-she) produce silks, teas and incense, which they export to Damalawa, Kota, and the other provinces. They are also known for their skill in horticulture, and their exquisite flower and fruit tree gardens. The town of Fuzho (FU-zo) is famous throughout the land for its excellent armorers.

The finest swords and katanas are also found here, produced by families who have for generations maintained this tradition of excellence. In the jungles of this province dwell many rare and colorful species of parrots, songbirds, and peacock.

PAN P'O PROVINCE

The province of Pan P'o includes the land on both sides of the Chan Jiang (chan-JANG) River, and the no-man's land west of the Tashu (TA-shu) mountains. The small but hardy Zuang (ZWANG) people make up most of the population, and farm the lowlands between the Xun Xi (zun-ZEE) and Chan Jiang rivers. South of the Xun Xi gold and ivory are plentiful, though dangerous to obtain. A species of reptilian humanoids (similar to the Ahl-At-Rab of Gondwana) live here, and are said to prey upon humans who venture into their territories.

The southern city of Chung trades in gold, silver and ivory, and the coastal city of Nanki (nan-KEE) is an active fishing and trading port, shipping many goods from the south and west to northern cities. Wu Han is an important river port where tin and lead are mined. Traders from the barbarian westlands bring jade and other goods here to trade for richly-made Khitan products, such as the silks, fragrances and aromatics of Sin Tao (sin-TAO).

HSUAN ISLAND (SWAN)

Located in the Elysium Sea, Hsuan Island is said to be populated primarily by Sidhe (faery folk). Legends say that plants of pure gold and herbs made of jade grow here, in hidden gardens tended by the Sidhe. The Khitans also claim that a magical herb grows here which, when administered in an elixir, can bring the dead back to life. As the Sidhe have little tolerance for humans, few outsiders will risk coming to this magical isle.

BABILARY (BA-bil-air-ee)

South of Hsuan is the isle of Babilary, which is ruled by females. The queen of Babilary is said to keep a large harem of males for her pleasure, most of whom are captive foreigners; the female Babilarians maintain their supply of men by capturing passing vessels. It is believed that all the men on this isle are either slaves or consorts.

PAUK (POWK)

This obscure island, located to the south of Babilary, is little more than a mound of craggy rock and sparse jungle. It has long been avoided by sailors, who claim that a giant species of cave-dwelling spider is found here. An ancient Khitan legend says that a corsair captain (whose name has long since been forgotten) buried a fabulous treasure in one of Pauk's many caverns.

KOTA (KO-tah)

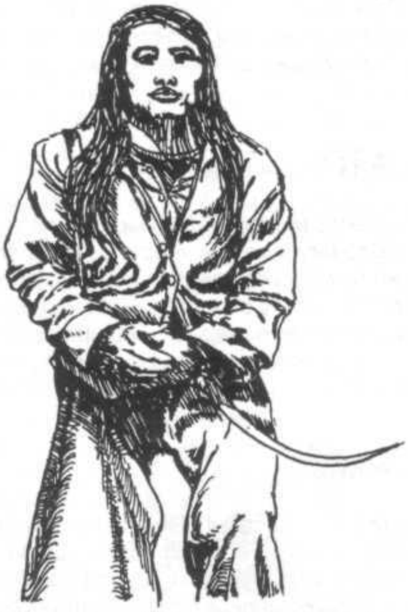
Kota is a nation of four distinct peoples: the Shan of the northwest, the Muong of the northeast, the Isam of central Kota, and the Khamar of the south and southeast regions. All are of average height, and have dark brown skin, black hair, and almond-shaped eyes. Though each of the four peoples speaks a different dialect, all are united under the Kota government at Ban Chieng.

The Isam people are the ruling class, and control much of the wealth of the country. Their culture shows signs of Khitan, Veddan, and Meluhhan influence, as is reflected in the pagoda-style buildings of the capital city of Ban Chieng.

Tin, gold, and silver from the Surabya mountains and produce, herbs, and spices from the southern regions are brought to the city each week. The Isam trade these resources to neighboring Damalawa and (to a lesser extent) other countries. Their style of dress resembles the Meluhhans.

The Khamar are fishers, and farmers of the lowlands of southern Kota. They are a poor people who live in small villages of thatched huts, most of which are located along the coastal areas. They are skilled in the use of small, single-masted sailing craft, and are adept at weaving and net-making. As the temperature in this sector of Kota is especially hot and humid, the Khamar wear only loincloths or loose cotton robes. The Muong live in the upland valleys of the mountains which lie to the northeast. Most are employed as miners, though some few Muong make their living by herding goats. They are always seen in black garb, and have their own religious leaders (mystics) and soldiers. The Shan live in permanent stone and thatch dwellings in the hill country of northwest Kota. They make fine pottery, metal products, and wood carvings. The men wear turbans and decorate their bodies with elaborate tattoos. Some of the northernmost Shan tribes are hostile to strangers, and will attack (with bows and knives) intruders who venture into their domains.

The peoples of Kota are generally quite religious, and most believe in a multitude of gods and spirits. Magical practices of various sorts are common throughout the realm, and are used to appease the beneficent spirits and exorcise those of evil intent. In the jungles there are tribes who, like the Damalawans, hold to the older beliefs of animism. Amongst these tribes the sacrifice of animals is a common practice, and is believed to placate the spirits and bring good fortune.



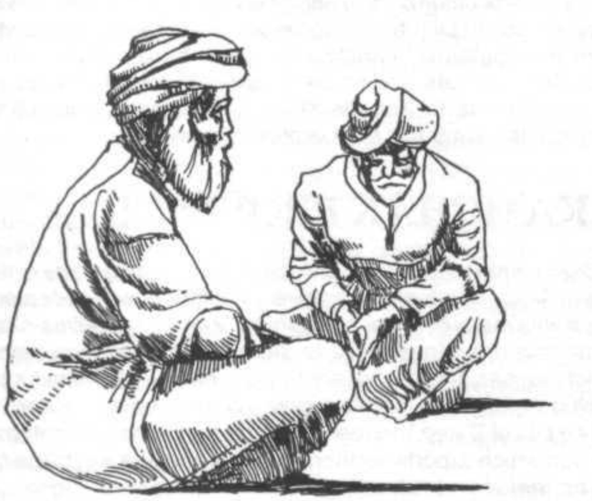
Kota has a small army, comprised mainly of Muong infantry (armed with sickle-like blades and spears) and Shan archers. They use elephants as cavalry, but not to any great extent. Kota enjoys good relations with the Damalawans, who control the waterways between Khitai and the west. Kotan and Damalawan ships pass through these waters en route to trade with other countries. Relations with Khitai are not as good, and have been tenuous at times due to border disputes. Even so, Kota's primary concerns lie to the north. There, in the Tashu mountains, live tribes of ogres and the fierce Tampan mountain folk. Both have long been a source of trouble for the Kotans who live in this sector, and raids are not uncommon.

MELUHHA (meh-LU-a)

Meluhha is a country of widely divergent geographical and cultural types. To the north lie the Kaila Mountains and the inhospitable Industan Desert, both populated only by small tribes of rugged nomadic people. To the south lie the sweltering coastal jungles, home only to wild beasts and a few isolated bands of primitive hunter-gatherers. Only in the Akhan River valley of the central region are there any large settlements. It is here, however, that the famed city of Mohenjo-Daro is to be found.

Mohenjo-Daro is the capital of Meluhha, located inland along the banks of the Akhan. A sprawling city of mud brick buildings, Mohenjo-Daro forms an important trade link between the nations of the eastern and western hemispheres. Merchants from many lands come here, both by sea and caravan, bearing goods of all description: silks, spices, ingots of copper, iron, silver and gold, precious stones, rare herbs, slaves, and much more. Ships from far away Sheba, Acheron, Khitai and even Tartessos visit Mohenjo-Daro, bringing with them news from many strange lands. As the vessels of all nations are always welcome here, Mohenjo-Daro has come to be known as "The Open City."

Due to the heavy trade which Mohenjo-Daro attracts, other settlements located along the Akhan River have slowly grown in size and eminence. Amri (AM-ree), situated closer to the Meluhhan coast, has become an important stop-over point for ships headed to the capital. Channu-Daro (ka-nu DA-ro), the next stop upriver, offers much in the way of entertainment to traders and travelers with its colorful festivals, bazaars and night life. Further up the river is Harad (HA-rad), a settlement which handles much of the trade from neighboring Molodo. Finally, in the north, lies the fortified city of Rangpur (rang-PER). Here the greater part of Meluhha's military is stationed, along with training facilities for its divisions of war elephants, light cavalry (lancers), and infantry (bow and scimitar).

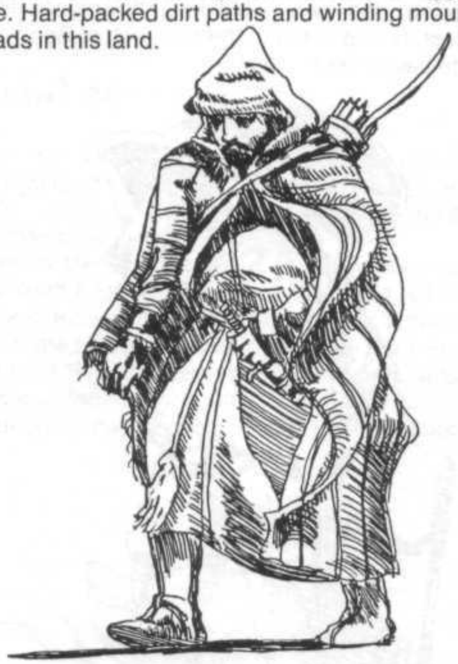


While the nomads of the northern regions bear a strong resemblance to the people of Molodo, most Meluhhans are of average to below average height, with deep brown skin, dark eyes, and black hair. The poor, who make up the vast majority of Meluhha's population, dress in loin cloths or wrap-around saris of inexpensive cotton gauze. The rich, most of whom live in the cities, dress in colorful robes, turbans and capes of silk, velvet, and finely woven cotton. They adorn themselves with gold and silver, and wear costly perfumes and scented oils.

The government of Meluhha is a sovereign monarchy, the sultan and his royal family dwelling in their palace at Mohenjo-Daro. The rest of Meluhhan society is divided by a rigid caste system. Below the royal class, in descending order, are: the priestly caste, the warrior caste, merchants, farmer/laborers, and the lowly *dasa* (peasants and slaves). In the capital city, merchants are accorded a somewhat greater degree of respect, and are sometimes able to attain positions of influence in the government. Otherwise, most positions of authority are occupied by relatives and friends of the royal family. Due to the inequities of the caste system, many of the dasa must beg or steal in order to survive. Meluhhan culture is similarly rigid in its laws and beliefs. Individuals may not rise above the caste they were born into, regardless of their accomplishments. Except amongst the dasa, it is considered improper for women to appear in public without a veil covering much of their face. The various religions practiced in Meluhha are all based on Mysticism, with strange cults and secret orders being found throughout the country.

MOLODO (mo-LO-doe)

Molodo is a mountainous country located on the western coast of Jambu, bordering Meluhha to the south and Baluchistan to the north. Except for the central plains region, the terrain is rugged and difficult to traverse. Hard-packed dirt paths and winding mountain trails suffice for roads in this land.



The people of Molodo are brown-skinned and of average height, having coarse black hair. They dress primarily in rough-spun wool garments, layered to provide protection from the harsh conditions of the upper altitudes. Their villages, consisting of wood, thatch and felt huts, are most often tucked away in valleys or along the coast.

The Molodons make their living herding goats and sheep (which they shear for their wool), and by farming the lowlands and plains. Though they mine small quantities of iron and copper from the Kush mountains, they are by and large a poor people.

There are three main settlements in Molodo: Karak, Kandar, and Herat. Once a year each tribe sends a small contingent of elders to Karak. There the representatives meet to reaffirm old ties and agreements, and to settle such disputes as may have arisen during the past year. The Molodon tribes also meet yearly at Kandar, bringing with them all goods designated for trade purposes, including bales of fleece, wool blankets, copper and iron ingots, and clay urns filled with rare mountain herbs (it is said that many of the tribes also deal in hashish and other intoxicants). Sometimes there is surplus grain to sell, but not often. At these yearly meetings prices are set and agreed upon for the following season's trade with Meluhha. The yearly meeting at Kandar usually lasts over a week, and is attended by much singing, dancing, and celebration.

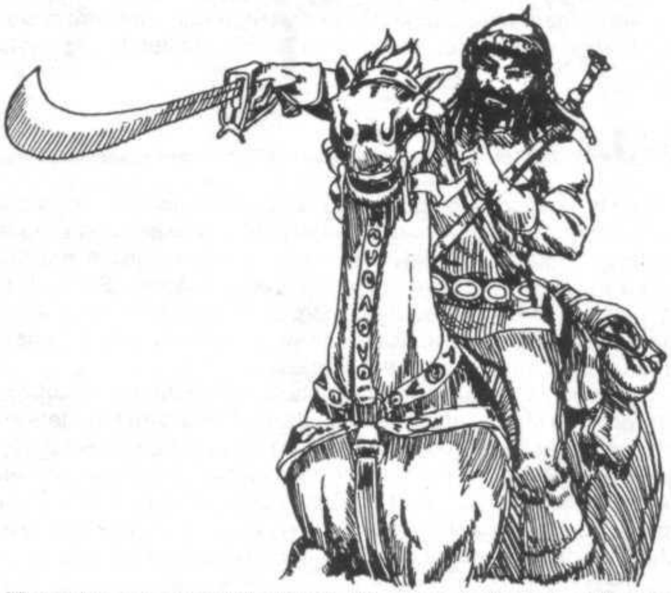
The third settlement, Herat, has a much grimmer purpose. It is here that the Molodon war chiefs meet whenever danger seems imminent. Though the Molodon tribes are not especially warlike, they will band together to avenge or repulse attacks by their traditional foes, the *Horse Nomads* of Baluchistan. There is no love lost between these two peoples, and raids and counterstrikes (usually of the hit-and-run variety) are common. As the Molodons are also skilled horsemen, such battles are often swift and fierce. Padded cloth armor, leather and fur helms, curved swords, and short bows are the usual armaments.

The Molodons worship tribal gods, usually in the aspect of earth-mother goddess and man-goat father (representing fertilityand husbandry). There is a particular cult known as the goat worshippers whose adherents dwell in the mountains to the east. They are usually seen dressed in goat skins, and for the most part keep to themselves. It is said that they are most hospitable towards strangers, whom they treat with honor. When a visitor arrives, the families draw lots; the winner provides the stranger with food (goat cheese and dried meat), and will usually offer his own wife or daughter for the traveler's enjoyment. Should the visitor stay more than a single night, another lottery is held, and the procedure repeated. Refusal to accept such hospitality would probably be considered an insult, possibly of a grievous nature.

The Molodons have a number of customs which may seem strange to outsiders. Besides the practice of lending out their wives and daughters, Molodons express their happiness with loud screams and howls. Their menfolk show gratitude by rubbing an individual's face with their beards. The Molodons also play an unusual game known as *Karkash*. The game is played on horseback, and utilizes a stuffed bull carcass. The object is to pass the carcass from player to player, keeping it away from the opposing team, until it reaches the team's goal at the end of the playing field. As team size can vary from 10-200 individuals, Karkash is not deemed a game for the faint of heart.

MONGALA (mon-GA-la)

Mongala is the name given to the Tu-Holo (too-HO-lo) desert region, and includes parts of the Kunlun (KUN-loon), Altai, Hanga (HAN-ga), and Khinghan (KIN-gan) mountain ranges. It is considered to be a barbarous land, rife with horrid monsters and nameless perils. The only humans who live here are the Mongalans, a sallow-skinned race of nomadic hunter/herders. They live on the grassy plains at the northern edges of the Tu-Holo desert, and keep great herds of goats, yak, and wild ponies. As suitable grazing land is scarce, the tribes must constantly keep on the move.



Mongalan men are skilled at tracking, and in the use of the short bow. Though not overtly aggressive, they are fierce fighters who have a reputation as the finest riders and horse archers on the continent. In the winter months the tribes travel to the foothills and mountains to hunt game. A shortage of game or a particularly harsh winter has been known to make some tribes desperate enough to raid neighboring lands (such as Himvati and Khitai).

No other part of Mongala is deemed safe for humans to dwell in. The Kunlun mountains are home to great numbers of snow leopards and yeti, as are parts of the other ranges in this region. The desert is populated by huge tribes of horrible ogres. They subsist mainly on wild Mongalan ponies, but are said to have an especial craving for human flesh. Some say at least one of the ogre tribes keeps captive humans and breeds them for food.

THE NORTHLANDS

The Northlands is a vast wilderness region located in the northwestern sector of Jambu. It is largely uninhabited, except for Yeti, mammoth, saber tooth, wolves, and herds of musk deer and caribou. The few humans who live here are both primitive and fierce; some are said to have domesticated the mammoth, which they supposedly ride in battle. The majority of these tribes, however, have no domesticated beasts of any sort, and have only the crudest weapons and clothing.

Mongalan and Khitan traders and trappers sometimes journey to the Northlands in order to obtain such valuable goods as musk, sable, horn, and hides. According to them, certain of the tribes can be dissuaded from doing harm to foreigners if given a few trinkets as tokens of friendship (colored glass beads are said to be especially favored). Once such a gift has been accepted, the tribesmen will consent to discuss almost any type of offer. As all the Northland tribes converse only in sign language, the presence of an interpreter is advisable.

Most of the tribes that can be dealt with will trade their goods for metal tools and weapons. Though primitive-seeming, the tribesmen are said to be crafty traders.

CHANA ISLAND (KA-na)

This small island, located off the western coast of Sala, seems to have once been an important port facility of some sort. Pitted stone and rotted wooden moorings are still to be found here, along with the remains of a small, walled fortress. Rich Meluhhans and Veddans come here occasionally, to hunt wild game such as lions, *Dhole* (wild dog), and various species of fowl. As it is considered extremely unwise to approach the ruined fortress, those who hunt here avoid the southern coastal area, and restrict their activities to the daylight hours.

SALA (SA-la)

Sala is a nation of various tribes of people, loosely organized as a confederation and governed by tribal elders. The erstwhile capital is the large village of Vishaka (vi-SHA-ka), near which are several mines which yield several different types of precious stones. Small villages of thatch huts dot the southern stretches of both coasts, and the grasslands of the interior. No Salans live in the north, where fearsome creatures are said to haunt the jungles.

The people of Sala are short in stature, with features and coloration similar to the Meluhhans. The majority are farmers and herders in the interior, and fishermen or hunters along the coasts. The Salans trade some with Meluhha, exchanging their gems for copper and brass items (the Salans know next to nothing of metallurgy). Except for this contact, the natives of Sala keep pretty much to themselves. Those who know them say they are a shy, and even secretive, folk.

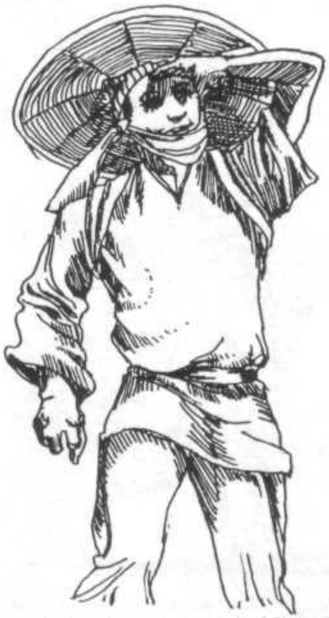
Little is known of the Salans' religious beliefs, which are believed to be shamanistic in nature. Travelers who have been to Sala cite the presence of carved wooden images, often over ten feet in height. Some claim the images depict serpents coiled in strange postures; others say the odd shapes are meant to represent various forces of nature.

SARAWA (sa-RA-wa)

The largely undeveloped country of Sarawa lies south of the Himvati mountain ranges, between Dravidia and Kota. The name Sarawa is very ancient, and has been used to designate the region which extends from the mountains to the southern seas for as long as anyone can recall.

The peoples of Sarawa are a mixture of Damalawan and Meluhhan types, and range accordingly in height and pigmentation. Most live in small villages, their homes usually being constructed of wooden frames covered over with woven grasses and reeds.

The largest settlement is Pandah (pan-DAH), which is actually a conglomeration of four smaller villages lying in very close proximity to each other. Pandah is the major center for trade amongst the different Sarawan peoples, and is home to the monarch of Sarawa (actually, king of the Kane people; see below).



The Sarawan population is composed of four different tribes, each with its own customs and beliefs. The Kane (KAH-nay) are the most populous of the tribes, and occupy much of the southern coast. They are primarily a fishing people, and have established good relations with both the other Sarawan tribes and the Damalawans. Their king is considered the monarch of Sarawa, and their warriors (unarmored spearmen bearing rattan shields and throwing clubs) are responsible for securing the coast from invasion by foreign powers.

The Akh (OK) people of central Sarawa are farmers. They grow large quantities of rice throughout the plains and hills of this region. Akh villages are easily recognizable by the large gates placed at the entrance of each settlement. These gates, constructed of local hardwoods, are always covered with strange glyphs and symbols which are believed to keep out demons and evil spirits. The Akh women are always seen dressed in colorful and elaborate headdresses, which contrast greatly with the relatively plain garments worn by the males.

The Lahtu (LA-too) live in the mountains to the northeast. Their villages are found at the higher altitudes only, and are quite primitive in appearance. The Lahtu have developed a crude type of crossbow, utilizing poison-tipped bolts, which they use for hunting. They grow maize and some rice, and keep herds of goats. Unlike the other Sarawan tribes, the Lahtu seem to have no religious beliefs.

In the northwestern mountains live the Lishun (lih-SHOON) tribes. Like the Lahtu, the Lishun are hunters, herders and farmers. They wear large, turban-like headdresses, and adorn themselves, their weapons, huts, and even their goats with heavy silver bangles. Most Lishun are addicted to an opiate derived from a species of mountain-grown poppy, which is used extensively in certain of their religious rituals (sizeable quantities are also brought to Pandah for export to other countries). Lishun holy men are generally practitioners of low magic, though a secret cult of mystics is also said to exist in this region.

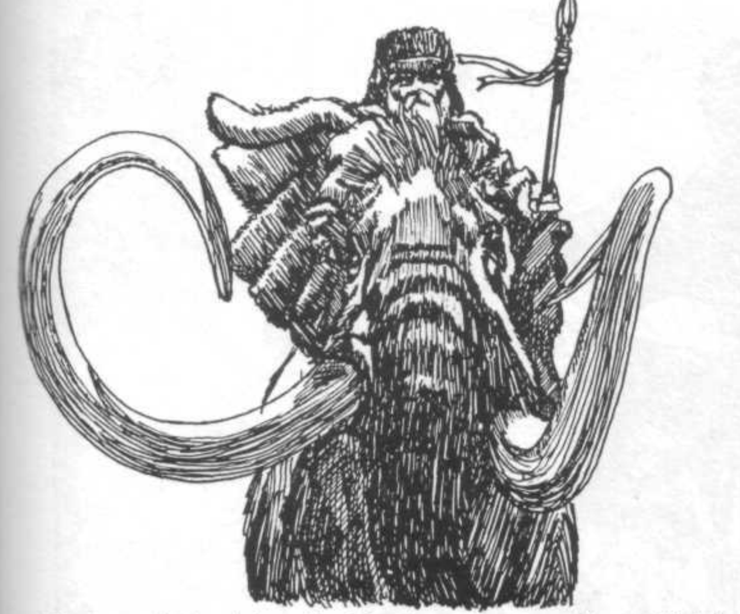
Overall, much of Sarawa is wilderness. Wild animals and other dangerous creatures are found throughout the land, and ancient ruins of unknown origin are said to exist in the unpopulated territories which lie to the north and northeast. As few Sarawans dare to venture into these areas, little is known of these places.

The monarch of Sarawa, though he is the absolute ruler of his own tribe, generally wields little influence amongst the other Sarawan peoples. This is partially due to an ancient tradition which prohibits the monarch from ever leaving the confines of Pandah. It is believed that to do so would cause a curse to be visited upon all the peoples of Sarawa, changing them into hideous, inhuman monsters.

TAMALA (ta-MA-la)

Located in the furthest northern reaches of Jambu, Tamala is a harsh region of ice-covered mountains and frozen tundra. In this vast expanse of snow live the rugged Tamalan tribes, the only caucasian peoples native to the continent.

The origin of the Tamalans is unknown; some believe they are descended from First Age Atlantean colonists, while others claim they are a lost tribe of Hyperboreans. As the Tamalans are lighter-skinned than the ancient Atlanteans and (on the average) shorter in stature than the Hyperboreans, neither theory seems entirely satisfactory. Tamalan legends shed little light on the subject, stating only that their peoples migrated to Tamala from "a distant and hostile land."



Whatever their origins, the Tamalans have a culture which is unique to the continent of Jambu. Surrounded by ice and snow, the Tamalans worship fire. The largest Tamalan settlement, Saba (SA-ba), is the focal point of their religion. It is here that the "sacred fire stick," an artifact of reputedly great power, is kept. Tamalans travel to Saba each year, taking with them a whale oil lamp. Tamala's religious leader (a shaman who bears the title *Keeper of the Flame*) lights each Tamalan's lamp with the sacred fire stick, thus is every Tamalan family provided with fire from the "one flame."

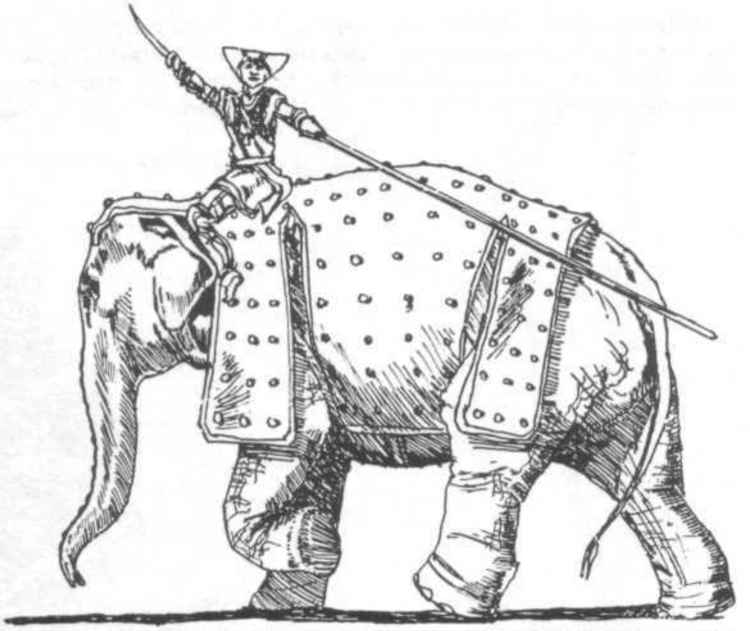
The Tamalans live in family clans of 20-200 individuals. Hunters of whale, seal, and caribou, they dwell in tent-houses of hide stretched over a whalebone frame. They dress in heavy layers of hides and furs, and make all their tools and weapons (harpoons, short bows and knives) from bone and horn. Though not a warlike people, the Tamalans are fierce fighters when roused to anger or threatened in any way. During extremely cold winters, many tribes are forced to hunt further south. Driven by hunger, some cross the frozen waters of the North Sea to the continent, where they raid small villages for such food as they can obtain.

TAPROBAN ISLAND (TAP-ro-bane)

To the southwest of Vedda is the island of Taproban, an uninhabited region covered with dense jungle. Several strange creatures (such as the two-headed, serpentine *Amphisbaena* and the gold/silver eating Alicanto bird) dwell here, along with many species of tropical birds and snakes. Though Taproban is said to be rich in precious stones and metals, few people come to this wilderness isle.

VEDDA (VAY-da)

Vedda is a small country occupying the southern tip of the Salwa peninsula. Its single city, Veddashud (vay-da-SHOOD), serves as the capital, and is widely known for its elaborate temples and shrines. Veddashud and its immediate environs also represent the only civilized settlement in the region, the rest of the country consisting of deep jungle and swamplands.



The people of Vedda resemble the folk of Meluhha's Akhan River valley in physical make-up and, to a lesser extent, mode of dress; Vedda's sweltering climate makes all but the lightest of garments completely impractical. The Veddans also have a sovereign monarch called *The Caliph* who lives in a great palace in the city, and an unusually complex caste system, structured as follows: *Ribhus* (royal family), *Rudras* (warriors), *Vayu and Sadyhas* (mystics and priests), *Visua* (nobility), *Maruts* (magicians), *Gandars* (musicians and artists), *Vasu* (merchants), *Tattva* (craftsmen), *Ahribu* (peasants and beggars), and *Aja* (slaves). Though Vedda's economy is based on its trade with Mohenjo-Daro, Veddan society places a high premium on its artists and craftsmen. Instead of exporting its plentiful supplies of gold, precious stones, ivory, rare woods and resins as raw materials, Veddan craftsmen turn such products into useful and ornamental goods of all sorts. So fine is the workmanship of the Veddan craftsmen that their high quality goods bring five to ten times the price of similar, good-quality items.

The amount of money realized from Vedda's trade with Mohenjo-Daro is such that the royalty and upper classes are amongst the wealthiest people in the known world. Most have their every need attended to by slaves (imported from Mohenjo-Daro) and servants. Unfortunately the wealth of the upper class does not extend to the lower castes, who make up over three-fourths of Vedda's population. These people, who work the mines and toil in the jungles, are for the most part poor and under-fed. Understandably, discontent runs high amongst these neglected people, and civil disturbances are not altogether uncommon.

The Veddan military, though small in number, is highly regarded on the continent. Veddan heavy war elephant units (equipped with four to six man towers) and elephant cavalry (single rider with 12-foot lance) are considered superior to comparable units of any nationality.

It is said that the Veddan royal guard even has a number of rhinoceros units, though some dispute these stories. Vedda also has a small but well-equipped navy, though these vessels are used more for trade purposes than anything else. The Veddans worship a multitude of gods and goddesses. Their temples are found throughout the city, all lavishly decorated with intricate carvings and frescoes. The less civilized folk who dwell in the jungles and on Camphor Island (known for its camphor tree forest) and Shiri Nahar (SHEER-ee na-HAR) are less particular; it is said that these shamanistic folk revere the first thing they see upon awakening each day.

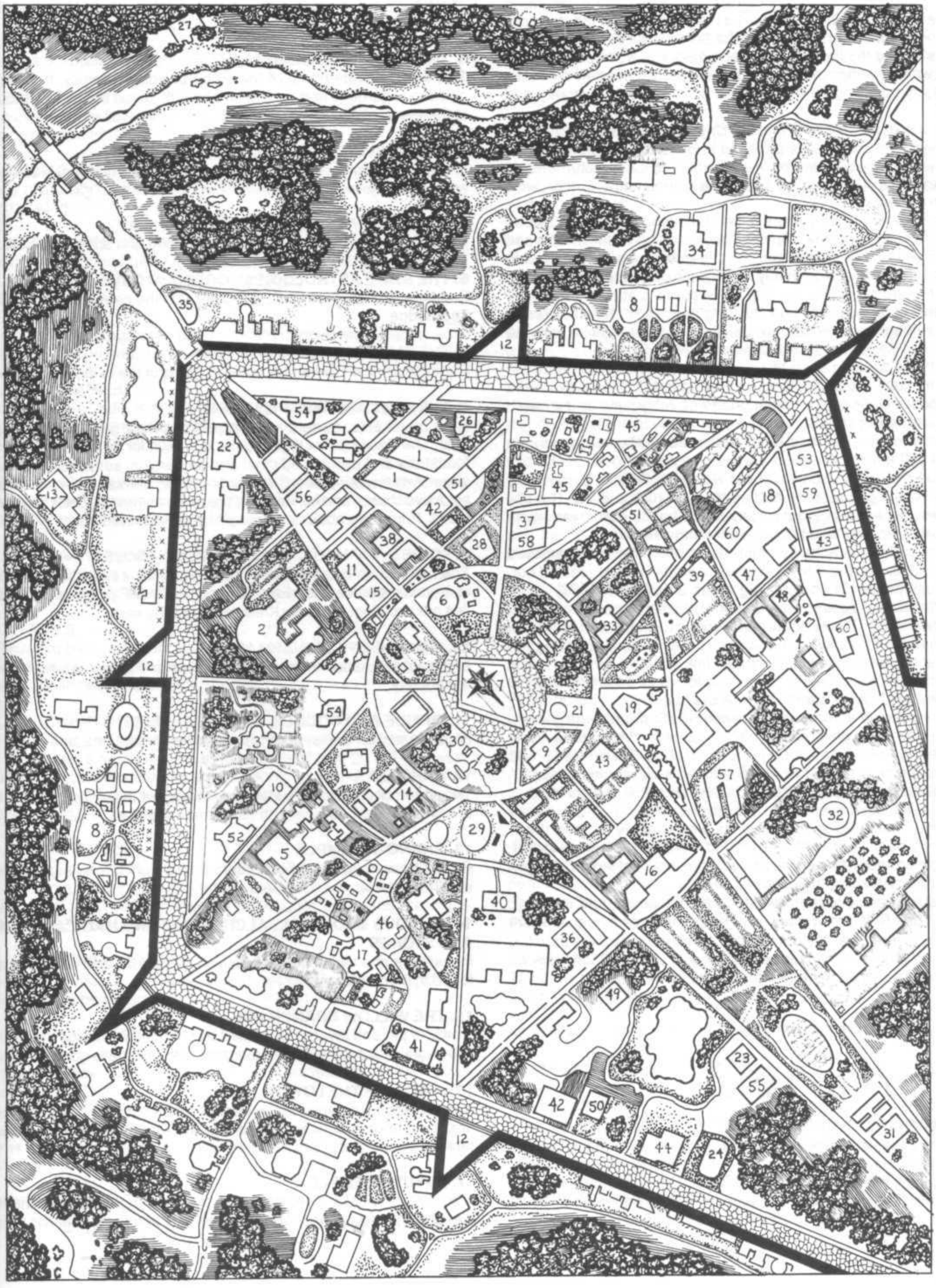
ZEMLAZELAN (ZEM-la-ZAY-lan)

Halfway between Jotunland and Jambu, on the boundary between the North Sea and the Sea of Baku, lies the isolated island of Zemlazelan. It is a rocky, cliff-cut island, uninhabited by humans. Indeed, no settlement of any sort has lasted for more than a generation or two in all the long history of this ancient island. Not only are the climate and terrain harsh and unrelenting, but native animal life makes Zemlazelan a dangerous place to live — or even to visit.

Zemlazelan is sparsely populated by animal life, but those species which are found here are fierce and powerful, made so by the difficult struggle for survival in this barren land. Most are remnants of ancient forms long vanished from the rest of the world. Dire wolves, cave bears, sabre-tooth tigers, giant rams, and other animals survive on the island, particularly in the Saragava (sa-ra-GA-va) Mountain range, which forms the northern spine of the isle. This jagged crest of mountains and cliffs is also said to be home to immense rocs, great dragons, and giant varieties of otter and wolverine.

In the foggy southern region of the Karmakula (kar-mak-U-la) Hills roam the last remnants of a wooly mammoth herd, as well as a few solitary members of a species of wooly rhinoceros. Both of these leviathans have long, coarse, snow-white fur which darkens to a spotted brown during the short Zemlazelanian summer. Their massive tusks and horns are highly prized by traders, who have been known to pay exorbitant prices for such items. Some believe the ground-up ivory of these beasts has magical properties.

The City of Tang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THE CITY OF TANG

Tang is the capital of Khitai, and the largest and most fabulous city on the continent of Jambu. Called *The Celestial City*, Tang was built centuries ago by the first emperors of the ancient Khitan nation. The original, walled section of the city was designed according to cosmic principles symbolizing the divine aspects of symmetry, harmony, and stability.

Inside the gates of The Celestial City, law and order are rigidly maintained. The city guards (dressed in ornamental metal lamellar armor and armed with katanas) are quite efficient; any disturbance is sure to arouse the swift attention of at least one company of six well-trained sentinels.

During the late evening hours, all entrances to the city are closed (except the celestial gates). Specific laws prohibit drunkenness and lewd or disturbing behavior, and the city guards are empowered to detain, question, and search any individuals of a suspicious nature. Though the areas outside the city walls are less strictly controlled, contingents of guards occasionally make sweeps of these sectors as well. Foreigners are welcome in the city, but must register with the City Office of Residency (located in the Imperial Courts).

While those seeking short-term stays can generally obtain a pass without difficulty, those planning on staying longer than seven days must submit detailed information on their background and avowed reasons for staying in Tang.

After this information has been evaluated by the registrars, the applicant will either be issued a pass or escorted outside the city gates. Non-residents caught without a pass in the city proper may expect an overnight jail term and a stiff fine (10-200 G.P.). The city guards keep a keen eye out for such scofflaws, particularly with regard to westerners, who are quite uncommon in Tang.

The city of Tang is actually much larger than the area enclosed within its walls, and includes a number of small villages located outside the city proper. These outlying areas are predominantly populated by the lower classes, many of whom have emigrated from other neighboring lands. The majority of residences, shops, and taverns in these areas are shabbily built and poorly maintained, reflecting the impoverished state of these unfortunate folk. Much of Tang's criminal element congregates in these areas, and foreigners seeking to avoid registration sometimes attempt to hide out here.

To placate the poor and to instill a nationalistic pride in the general populace, the Tang government often sponsors elaborate festivals inside the city walls. Laws are relaxed, food and drink is served, and government officials give rousing public talks. Throughout the proceedings, the superiority of Khitan culture and the unity of Khitai's social classes are stressed. At the government's behest, Tang's nobility, merchant and scholar classes also strongly support these nationalistic ideals. As might be expected, it is deemed unwise to criticize the government; those who do so risk being arrested on charges ranging from disturbing the peace to treason.

The main entrance to the city is found to the south, and is called: *The Gate of the Red Bird*. It is well-guarded at all times by a contingent of two dozen sentinels. Platoons of city guards and archers man the 40-foot high walls which enclose the celestial city. Additional troops are garrisoned in watch towers situated along the walls.

THE CITY OF TANG

1. THE IMPERIAL COURTS

It is here that the work of governing the kingdom takes place. Several official buildings are contained under these two massive roofs, including the Offices of Taxation and Trade. Criminal cases and civil disputes are heard here, and all judgements and major government decisions are made within the walls of this elaborate complex.

2. THE PALACE OF HARMONY

The official palace and home of the emperor and his family. Formal meetings, receptions and diplomatic functions are held here. This is the public house of the emperor as ruler and law maker.

3. THE GREAT PALACE OF LIGHT

This is the private home of the emperor and his family. It contains numerous gardens and fountains, and is the most beautiful structure in the whole of Jambu.

4. THE TANG UNIVERSITY COMPLEX

A state university where students are schooled in various arts and sciences only.

5. UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND ALCHEMY

Medicine, herbology and alchemical healing arts are taught here.

6. THE STATE ASTROLOGICAL OBSERVATORY

Scholars from all over Khitai consider this the center of astrological knowledge.

7. THE TANG TEMPLE

Dedicated to the "Seven Immortals" (gods of the celestial spheres).

8. THE EAST AND WEST MARKETS

Here merchants, traders and farmers sell their goods to the populace. The West Market in particular is known for its wide selection of foodstuffs and exotic medicinal and alchemical supplies. Costs are about two times standard rates. The East Market caters to a less selective crowd, and carries only the more common goods and foodstuffs. Prices are about ten percent below standard rates.

9. SOCIETY OF MAGICAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

This is a state-owned library and research center for magical/alchemical studies. Membership costs 1,000 G.P. per year. The facilities are excellent, but only Khitans may study here.

10. SCHOOL OF CULINARY ARTS

A special school for chefs, many of whom find lucrative employ with the nobility.

11. OFFICE AND COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS

For state issued works, books, pamphlets and notices.

12. BARRACKS

Two dozen city guards are stationed at each of these facilities, which are found at various locations throughout the city.

13. SHANG-TI TEMPLE

God of heaven, his worship centers on his agricultural aspects and weather control.

14. VARIOUS MEDICINAL, ALCHEMICAL AND MAGICAL SHOPS AND STORES

Including some which deal exclusively in poisons and narcotics are found in this sector.

15. THE WILLOW BRANCH INN

A simple inn and tavern frequented by the middle classes (including many city guards). Prices are average, and service is good.

16. JEWEL OF THE LOTUS

A high class inn catering to the wealthy and the nobility. The services are of superior quality, and the prices are about five times standard rates.

17. KI-YUNG TEMPLE

A school for monks, specializing in the teaching of eastern mental and physical disciplines. Any may apply for entrance, which is free.

18. THE KUN-I-SAN THEATRE

Here patriotic plays are performed which depict the history of Khitai and the heroic exploits of past emperors.

19. CLOTHIER

All types of apparel. Workmanship and prices are average.

20. SUN-LI PARK

Filled with many flowering trees, flower gardens and a stream, this park is open to all.

21. PUBLIC WELL

Many of the city's inhabitants come here to obtain water for drinking and cooking.

22. METALSMITH AND WEAPONER

Good — very good quality and standard prices. Custom-made articles are available at two times standard rates.

23. BLACKSMITH

A very old family business that is small but does high quality work. Prices are ten percent above standard rates.

24. TANG STABLES

The only horse trader in the Celestial City. Excellent mounts are available at two to five times standard prices.

25. JEWELER

Fair to excellent quality. Unless paid exorbitant prices (two to eight times standard rates) the owners of this establishment tend to turn out goods of inconsistent quality.

26. HWANG-TI TAVERN

This establishment is frequented primarily by martial artists and Khitan soldiers. Prices are average, and quality is generally good.

27. TEMPLE

Believed to be a school for assassins, run by a dark order of monks. Some Khitans claim that the government secretly donates money to the temple in return for certain "favors."

28. MERCHANTS GUILD

All merchants and traders wishing to do business in Tang must register here or face reprisals if caught. Membership is 20 G.P. per year, plus one percent of all sales (payable monthly). The Guild wields substantial power in the city, and can cause a great deal of trouble for those who ignore its edicts.

29. PUBLIC BATHS

These attractive facilities cater to the middle and upper classes, and offer a variety of services, including: bath (with scented oils, 1 S.P.), manicure (5 C.P.), haircut/shave (1 S.P./2 C.P.), clean and press garments (1 S.P.), female attendants (10 G.P. each).

30. OKAMA PUBLIC PARK

Beautifully landscaped gardens and quaint pagoda-style gazebos decorate this public area.

31. STABLES/ARMORY

Horses used by the city guards are kept here, as are supplies, weapons, and armor. The facility is guarded night and day by two dozen sentinels.

32. CITY ARMORER/WEAPONER

Arms and armor for the city's guard units are produced and maintained at this facility.

33. MING TAVERN

This establishment caters to the upper classes, and is notable for its gourmet cuisine and fine services (including rooms, baths, and courtesans). Prices are five times standard rates. Many high-ranking government officials and nobles frequent this exclusive facility.

34. SALTER AND SPICE DEALER

Exotic spices from around the world are available here. Prices are very high (five to ten times standard rates), but the quality of all goods is always superior.

35. INN OF THE RED BIRD

An inn of mediocre quality catering primarily to travelers and adventurers. Prices are too high (two times standard rates), but the proprietor is renowned as a lover of gossip, news, and strange tales of all sorts.

36. METALSMITH

Good quality merchandise at standard rates. Items made to order for fifty percent above standard prices.

37. GEM CUTTER AND JEWELER

Average both in quality and price; however, the proprietor is known as a keen assessor of precious stones of all types.

38. WOODCRAFTER

Excellent quality goods and carvings. Prices are two to three times standard rates, with custom work costing about twice as much. Fine jewelry boxes and chests are available here.

39. ARCHITECT/ENGINEER

An old, family business with excellent credentials, having been employed by the emperor on such projects as the Palace of Harmony and the Tang Temple. Prices are five times standard rates, but all workmanship is guaranteed.

40. CARTOGRAPHER

A government-financed operation that supplies maps to the military and the Merchants Guild. City maps are available to the public for 10 G.P.

41. LIMNER

Painters and illustrators of exceptional skill are employed here. Most are available for 10-20 G.P. per day.

42. SCRIBE/LINGUIST

A staff of ten scholars is on hand, and will copy or translate manuscripts for 10-20 G.P. per page. Languages include Khitan, Dravidian, and most Gondwanan dialects.

43. MERCANTILER

A dealer in exotic oils and curios from the west. The proprietor will purchase decorative items of almost any sort for standard prices. Selling prices are two to ten times standard, depending on the rarity of the item in question.

44. EMBALMER

The city's highest-priced and most exclusive firm. Prices range from 2,000 G.P. and up.

45. PRIVATE RESIDENCES OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

46. PRIVATE RESIDENCES OF MERCHANT GUILD OFFICIALS

47. LOCKSMITH

Another old family business that has done work for the emperor and other government officials. Prices are two times standard rates.

48. PRIVATE RESIDENCES FOR STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITY FACULTY

49. CHANDLER
Tallow, soaps, and sealing wax are available here at standard prices.

50. TAXIDERMIST
High quality and prices (100 G.P. per level of the creature to be stuffed and mounted) are the hallmarks of this respected establishment.

51. PERFUMERY
Exotic scents of all sorts are available here at prices ranging from 1-200 G.P. per dram.

52. THE BLOSSOM HOUSE
A high class brothel famed for its beautiful and charming courtesans. Prices range from 100 G.P. and up.

53. ALCHEMIST
All ingredients and most mixtures available at fifty percent above standard costs. The proprietor is eccentric and irritable, but is known throughout Tang as an individual of surpassing knowledge and skill.

54. CARRIAGE AND LITTER MAKER
An establishment catering to a very wealthy clientele. Prices are three to four times standard rates, but quality is superb.

55. RUGMAKER
Beautiful goods and imports, at prices ranging from 200-20,000 G.P.

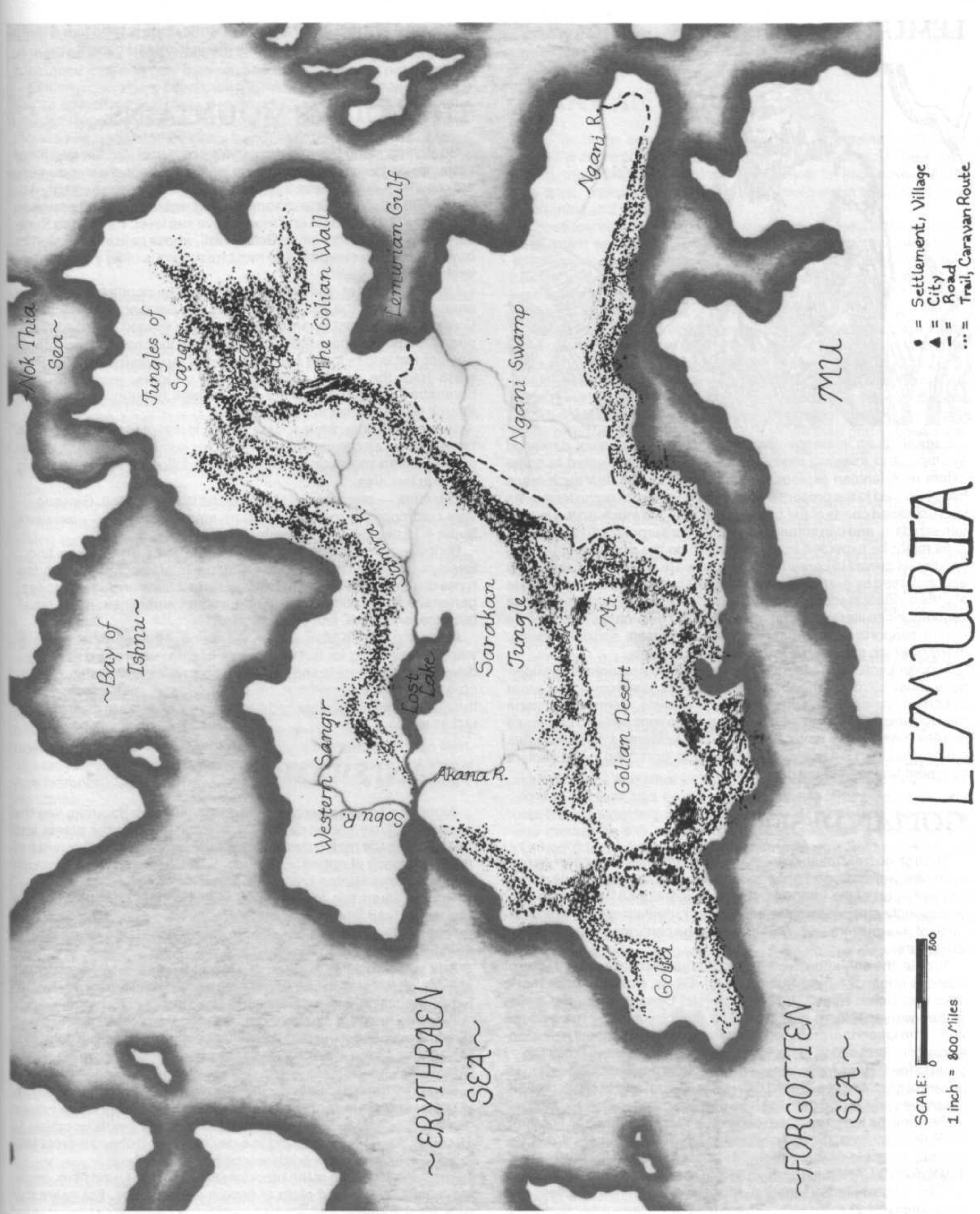
56. HERBALIST
Teas and herbal remedies available at standard rates. The proprietor is considered an expert at identifying herbs and plants of all sorts.

57. TEXTILER
Silks, fine cloth, and velvet are sold here at two times standard rates. The proprietor will purchase goods from independent traders at one-half standard prices.

58. LITIGANTS
This respected legal office employs experts on tax laws, trade and imports, civil suits, and criminal cases.

59. TOYMAKER
This shop is renowned for its clever and attractive wares. The proprietor is a tinker of exceptional skill who creates most of the items found in the store.

60. MAGICAL SUPPLY
This small establishment is the only licensed dealer in magical goods in the city proper. Most types of elixirs, potions, powders, dusts and ritual supplies are available here at two times standard rates. Some minor magic items and scrolls are available (at higher prices) from time to time, but demand usually exceeds existing supplies.


LEMURIA
~Nok Thia Sea~
Jungles of Sangir
The Golian Wall
Lemurian Gulf
Ngani R.
Ngani Swamp
MU
~Bay of Ishnu~
Samra R.
Lost Lake
Sarakan Jungle
Mt.
Western Sangir
Akana R.
Sobu R.
Golian Desert
Golia
~ERYTHRAEN SEA~
~FORGOTTEN SEA~
SCALE: 0 800
1 inch = 800 Miles
• = Settlement, Village
▲ = City
— = Road
··· = Trail, Caravan Route

LEMURIA (le-MOOR-ee-a)

Lemuria is an immense continent of primieval jungles, darkened swamps, and towering mountain ranges. Though charted to some extent by Atlantean explorers during the First Age, few such maps have survived to the present day (the Second Age, in game terms). As such, detailed charts of the Lemurian interior are much-prized by certain scholars, and can sometimes be sold for surprisingly high prices.

As might be expected from its position on the world map, tropical conditions prevail in Lemuria. Heavy rains are common, occasionally accompanied by hurricane-force winds. The hot and steamy climate affords an ideal medium for plants of all sorts, and swatches of dense vegetation can literally spring up overnight. The profusion of plant life in turn supports an astounding variety of animals and wild beasts, many of which can now be found only on Lemuria.

Though Lemuria is essentially an uncharted and untamed wilderness, its wealth of untapped natural resources has always been a lure to certain daring adventurers and opportunists. Some have made their fortunes in this strange land; others who ventured into Lemuria's jungles have simply never returned. The following information has been culled from the accounts of those who journeyed to this ancient continent and lived to tell their tales.

GOLIAN DESERT

Though no truly reliable account of this area has ever been discovered, the Golian Desert appears on a number of maps made during the early part of the First Age, and so is mentioned here in passing. Purportedly situated amidst the Golian mountain range, the existence of this mysterious region has yet to be confirmed by trustworthy observers.

To date, the only known writings on this subject have proved to be of dubious origin; the mad Nubian priest, Okala, claims to have met a man who hailed from "The Gaolean [sic] Desert, where the sands glisten with specks of gold dust, and stretch as far as the eye can see." The Quaddani magician, Toth-Azzis (a known user of hallucinogenic powders) stated in his infamous memoirs: "Many times have I been to the Golean mountains, where, amidst the towering peaks, is a desert of great beauty. There I travel to meditate, and to converse with the myriad spirits and demons who dwell beneath the crystal sands."

Perhaps the least reputable account is that of the Sheban sorcerer, Ali-Raji-Khan, who, though possessed by a lesser demon, was occasionally capable of lucid thought. In his bizarre: **HISTORY OF A THOUSAND LANDS** he writes:

"There is a desert in Lemuria, though you shant find it unless you cross the Golean mountains. Those who have seen it say that it is a place most strange, and that a city of white stone is to be found there. Who built this city, and who dwells within it? Alas, I cannot say."

THE GOLIAN MOUNTAINS

Stretching along the entire southern coast and into the interior of Lemuria, the Golian mountains form what is perhaps the world's largest mountain range. Several peaks in this range (most notably Mt. Sarak and Mt. Nawa) are among the highest in the world, rising to elevations of 20,000 feet and more above sea level. East of the Sarakan jungle is the aptly named Golian Wall, whose palisades explorers have called "the steepest and most treacherous cliffs in the known world."

Like the Tarakans, the Golians are said to be populated by hostile creatures. Along the southern edge of the Sarakan jungle and the Golian Wall the most common predators are winged pterosaurs and pteradactyls, who make their nests high atop the sheerest rock faces. *The coastal ridges to the south are visited by wyverns, who migrate* north from the nearby continent of Mu. Ogres, manticore, and ouranabad (winged hydra) are said to dwell throughout the range, though reportedly not in great numbers.

The region's flora, while sparse at best, is notable for its variety. The fabled Khitan alchemist, Chiang-Tu, in his somewhat erratic treatise on the Golian mountain range, cites the following herbs as being native to this area:

"Jasmine — plentiful; 1-4 plants found in most cases. Ginseng — very common; 2-8 roots found, sometimes more. Ash — excellent buds; 4-16 per tree, but seasonal.

Poppy — very potent, but scarce; 1-2 plants an average find." Besides his notations on plants, Chiang-Tu also comments on the types of gemstones found in the Golian mountains, including "topaz, garnets, a fine quality of white jade, some tourmalines, many small but excellent onyxs, and chrysoprase."

According to the Khitan alchemist, "Some of these precious stones you will have to dig for, but not all; look in areas where rain cascades down the mountainside and gathers in pools or natural basins. Creditable stones can sometimes be found lying in such catchwaters, though it is well to note that certain intelligent beasts are aware of this fact as well."

NGANI SWAMP

Along the southeastern coast and adjacent inland areas lies the sunken expanse known as the Ngani Swamp. Here the plants and trees grow in the most hideously gnarled shapes, and the air reeks of the fetid stench of rotting vegetation. Giant leeches ply the brackish waters, many attaining a length of four feet or more.

Ghouls haunt this foul swampland, some transformed from the bodies of dead lemures, others more closely resembling neanderthaloids. Obscured by clouds of noxious vapor, Hantu (earth-bound demons) eagerly await their next victims.

And yet, with all its horrors, the Ngani Swamp is by far the most well-traveled region in Lemuria. There are two reasons for this seeming contradiction: black pearls and black lotus.

Fetching prices of 100 gold pieces or more per carat, Ngani black pearls are amongst the most precious baubles in the civilised world. Only in this region can the peculiar species of shellfish which create Ngani black pearls be found.

Certain of the Salawati island tribes come here, risking life and limb in order to obtain these glistening, obsidian gems. Here a lucky diver can make a small fortune in short time (1-10 black pearls weighing 1-10 carats can usually be found in a day's diving), if one can avoid falling prey to the swamp's predatory beasts.

The narcotic pollen of the black lotus is also to be found here, growing amidst the tangled roots of certain swamp trees. For years the wealthiest Turanian and Sheban merchants have sent ships of mercenary adventurers to this swamp, in hopes of acquiring a few ounces of the infamous "Ngani black". The minimum price for this potent substance is said to vary between 100-300 gold pieces per dram.

Skilled pickers have been known to find 1-8 black lotuses in a single day of searching, each plant yielding approximately 1-4 drams of powder. Illegal in many lands, the powder of the black lotus is nonetheless highly coveted by black marketeers throughout the civilised world. As the demand for both black pearls and "Ngani black" is always quite high, competition for these goods is, at times, quite fierce. As such, travelers and entrepreneurs who venture into this realm may meet both human and inhuman adversaries.

SANGIR

The northern and north western coastal areas of Lemuria — called Sangir by the Shebans — consist entirely of dense jungle. This area is inhabited by a number of wild beasts, many of whom are dangerous to man. Poisonous and constricting snakes are also common, and are the bane of unwary travelers in this realm. Bands of giant, ape-like lemures also dwell here, though these creatures are believed to be somewhat less common than they were in ages past.

Traders who have journeyed to Sangir report an abundance of many useful varieties of herbs and plants; draconium, lotus, tamarisk, and jasmine are said to be especially common. Hemp, jute, and asarabaca are also native to Sangir, and can be obtained in large quantities.

According to ancient Dravidian legend, Sangir was once colonized by Atlanteans of the First Age, who "arrived in great silver vessels, which rode the wind as a sailing ship dost ride the waves." Once accepted as fact, the Dravidian legends are now almost unanimously considered false, this due in great part to the lack of any substantial evidence.

THE SARAKAN JUNGLE

Admidst the central regions of Lemuria lies the Sarakan jungle. Located in an immense valley between the Tarakan and Golian mountain ranges, the Sarakan jungle is easily the wildest and most inhospitable region of Lemuria. Explorers in this realm have understandably been few, given the relative inaccessibility of this almost hidden land. The only surviving written account of this region is credited to the First Age historian, Andromelius, a man about whom little else is known. He states:

"Hemmed in to the north, south, and west by towering peaks, in a valley hung with mist, is the jungle, called Sarakan by natives of the Kiowan Islands. Here dwell monstrosities which defy the imagination: giant lizards over 100 feet long, bat-winged reptiles who make their nests amongst the nearby cliffs, and serpents the thickness of a man's thigh. Even the very plants and trees grow as if unrestrained by natural law, with both wonderous and horrific results; a single fruit is large enough to sustain seven men, a hedgerow of thorns becomes a barrier of spikes, a plant whose normal counterpart might feed on insects is large enough to snap men up like flies.

No men as we know live here. Instead, the jungles are home to a bestial species of humanoids who, by their appearance, seem more closely akin to the lemures. They are intelligent enough, it seems, to make tools and weapons of stone, and to erect crude huts of straw and other such materials. Some were seen to have boats of hollowed logs, which they used to ply the waters of the mighty river which runs through the jungle (called the Samra, as the Elysians later informed us). Contact with these bestial folk I believe to be exceedingly ill-advised; from a safe distance we spied them roasting the flesh of others of their kind in preparation for a rude feast. Rows of human-like skulls were seen to be used as decorations on some huts, suggesting that enmity between separate tribes is commonplace, and perhaps even traditional. A series of obscure carvings, found amidst the ruins of one abandoned village, seems to suggest the otherwise fantastic possibility that certain of the sub-men possess a rudimentary knowledge of magic."

TARAKAN MOUNTAINS

The Tarakans are an imposing range of mountains which span nearly the entire continent of Lemuria from east to west. Largely unexplored, the Tarakans are believed by many to be impassable. At the very least, passage through this area would seem to be both time-consuming and dangerous.

Those few who claim to have traveled through parts of these mountains report perils sufficient to deter all but the most courageous of adventurers; gaping chasms, sheer cliffs, and crumbling rock ledges bar the way at every turn. Swirling winds and unpredictable downdrafts pose hazards to even the most skillful climbers, and the highest peaks are capped with ice.

Worse still are the predatory creatures which populate the mountains. Along the northern face of Tarakans live rocs, griffon, and other vicious beasts. The southern cliffs are no less dangerous, being the dwelling places of several different species of winged reptilians. Perhaps none would even consider exploring the Tarakan mountains were it not for one Kalik of Turan, who, it is said, left a startling account of his own travels in this realm. Though cracked and yellowed with age, the scroll bearing Kalik's tale was, for the most part, quite legible. When deciphered by the Atlantean scholar Brunus, its contents read as follows:

"After eleven days and nights of arduous travel, our party, led by the wizard Solan, finally reached the base of the Tarakan mountains. If we expected easier going ahead, we were soon to learn otherwise. During our very first approach we were repulsed by two griffon, who killed three of our group before Solan and the rest of us could drive them off. Our next attempt at scaling the mountains proved only slightly less harrowing; upon attaining an altitude of approximately 700 feet we were set upon by a pack of dire wolves. This time, being prepared, we lost but one man: the bearer, Hasim.

At this point, I attempted to convince Solan of the futility of our mission. As usual, Solan would hear nothing of turning back. Dispirited by the last turn of events, the rest of our bearers deserted, leaving only Solan and I to continue the quest." (A long section on Kalik's worsening relationship with Solan follows, but is omitted here in the interest of brevity.)

"For the next two days we continued to scale the mountain, avoiding rock slides and other pitfalls by the narrowest of margins. Believing that our luck had finally changed for the better, Solan became over-bold; attempting to bound across a deep crevice, he fell, and was dashed to bits on the rocks far below. With a heavy heart I climbed down into the ravine, intending to give Solan's remains a proper burial.

Upon reaching the spot where Solan had alighted, I made a most fascinating discovery: a diamond, of excellent quality and nearly as large as a small plum. Subsequent examination of the surrounding area revealed several more such stones, and a handful of lesser gems as well. Solan had indeed found the riches he craved, though at a high cost."

THE ERYTHRAEN SEA (air-ITH-ree-en)

Sometimes referred to as "The Sea of Sheba" or "The Queen's Sea" — both in reference to the Sheban seafarers who have made this sea their own — the Erythraen Sea is a fairly calm body of water criss-crossed by the heavily traveled sea-lanes of the Sheban trade.

The borders of this sea run along the continent of Gondwana, Turan, across the strait between Turan and Jambu which connects this sea to the sea of Baku, down the coast of Jambu to Lemuria, and then back along the uneven line of the Isles of Ozar and the Land of Punt. In the east, the Erythraen Sea gives way to the Bay of Ishnu between Lemuria and the Veddan subcontinent on the south coast of

Jambu.

Where the sea borders on Lemuria there is little water-borne traffic. Ancient tradition has named this region *The Forbidden Waters*, and though none now know the derivation of the name, it has an evil reputation among sailors. Only the most foolhardy would even consider sailing The Forbidden Waters. The name appears even on the most ancient of maps, and has sufficed to keep countless generations from venturing into the area.

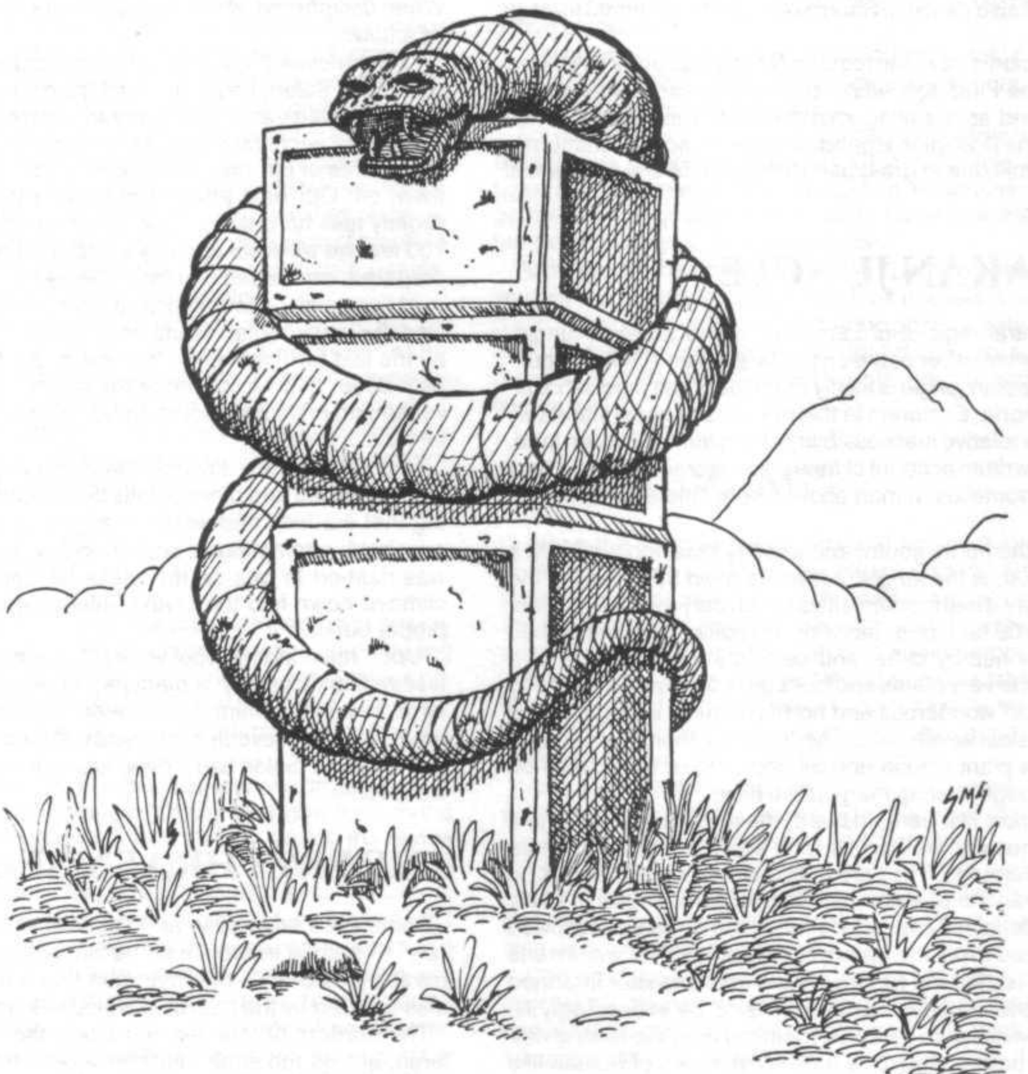
The Erythraen Sea is known for its abundance of aquatic life. Its calm coastal waters are usually crowded with small fishing boats. The Forbidden Waters are said to be subject to fierce seasonal storms, as are the southern straits around the Isles of Ozar. Here, at the Fangs of Lemuria, the weather is harsh and the sea treacherous.

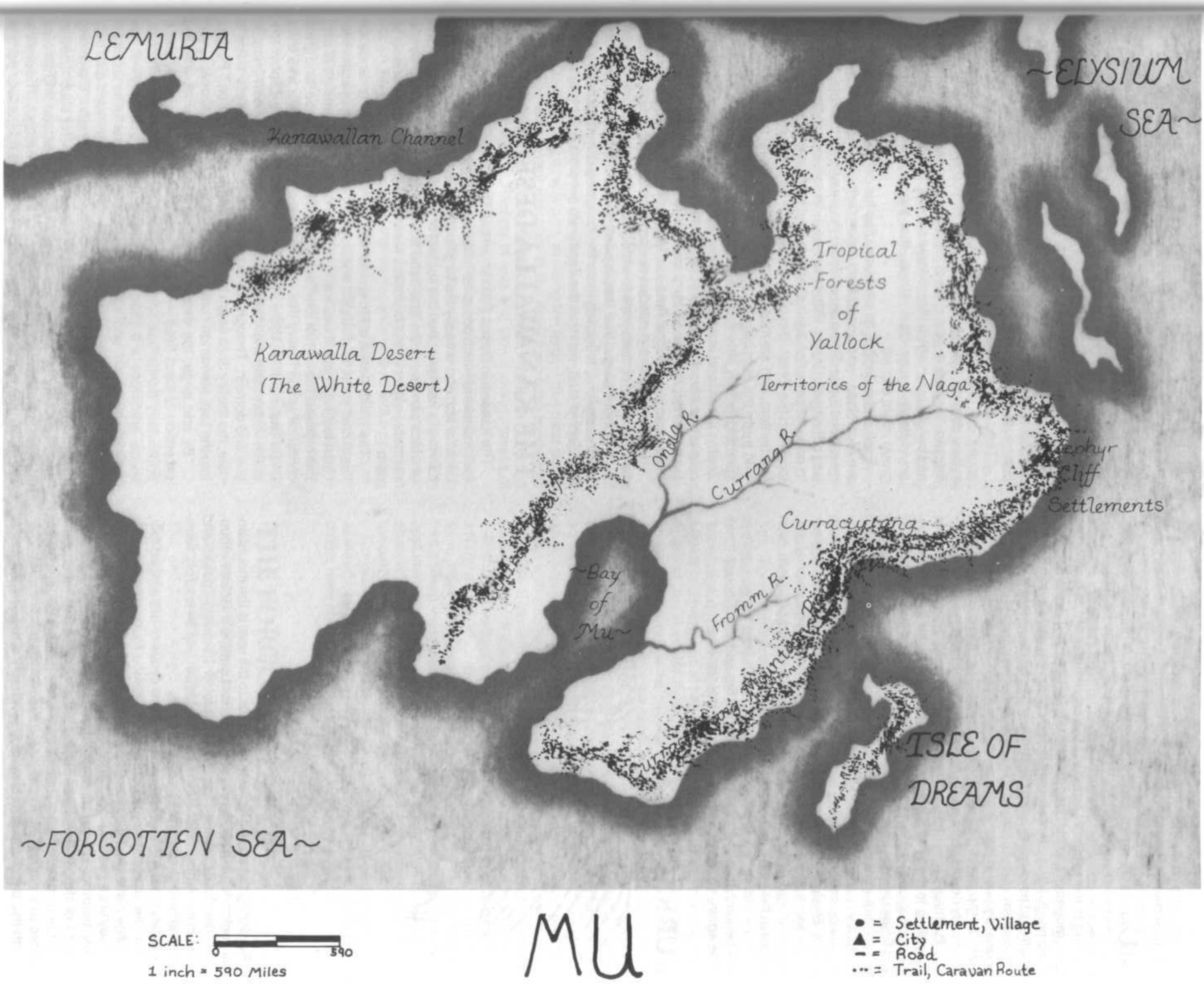
THE ISLES OF OZAR (O-zar)

Strung in a ragged chain from the great island of Punt to the coast of Lemuria, the Isles of Ozar form an arbitrary boundary between the Erythraen Sea and the Forgotten Sea. In ages past, they were known as the Fangs of Lemuria, a name derived from the treacherous line of low-lying islets, rocky spires, and underwater reefs which comprise the chain. Running roughly east-north-east from Punt, the undersea ridge which forms these islands is a hazard to any vessel which dares to sail these waters. Besides the constant threat of tearing the ship's bottom out on a reef, the currents that swirl through the island chain can play havoc with navigation, especially at night. Storms are common as well, and more than one ship is believed to have felt the bite of the Fangs in days gone by.

The largest island is said to have been the home of the Archmage Ozar, a powerful and eccentric wizard who claimed sovereignty over all these isles over a hundred years ago. Legend has it that Ozar populated all but the most insignificant of these isles with a bizarre menagerie of exotic beasts collected from over the entire globe, and even from other Planes and Dimensions. He is also supposed to have kidnapped beautiful human women, nymphs, and other such females. No one knows what his purpose may have been, though the topic has been the subject for much conjecture and fanciful storytelling.

Sailors generally avoid these waters, and not entirely because of the navigational hazards of the isles. It is said that all who approach the island have heard noises unlike any they have heard before — the calls of wild beasts, and weird roars from monsters and other strange creatures. No one has claimed to have landed here since the coming of Ozar.




LEMURIA
~ELYSIUM SEA~
Kanawallan Channel
Kanawalla Desert
(The White Desert)
Tropical Forests of Yallock
Territories of the Naga
Onala R.
Currang R.
Curracutting
Zephyr Cliff Settlements
~Bay of Mu~
Fromm R.
ISLE OF DREAMS
~FORGOTTEN SEA~
SCALE:
0
590
1 inch = 590 Miles
MU
● = Settlement, Village
▲ = City
– = Road
··· = Trail, Caravan Route

MU

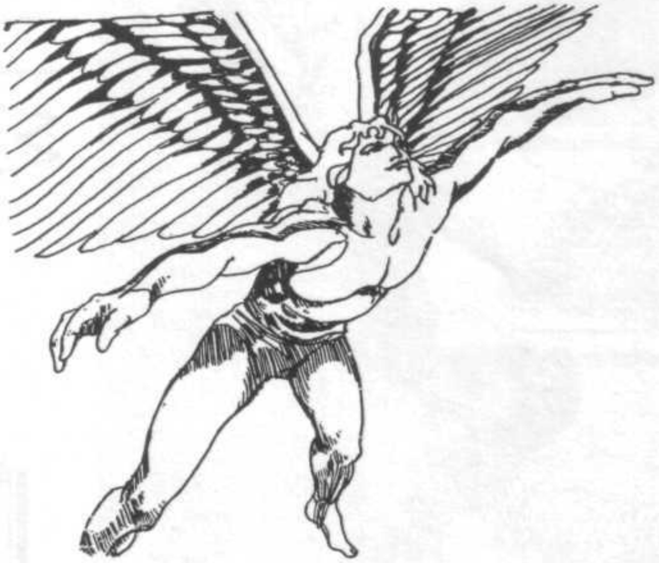
MU

Lying to the south of Lemuria is the continent of Mu, a land of volcanic mountains, white deserts, and tropical forests. Like its neighbor to the north, Mu is a largely uncivilised continent, and travelers to this far-off land have never been great in number. Mu's climate is variable; the eastern rain forests are hot and extremely humid by day, but pleasantly cool in the evenings, when sea breezes blow inland off the water. In the eastern desert region, the heat is stifling, and the air is practically devoid of moisture. Along the volcanic ridges the temperature fluctuates, alternately becoming moderately warm or very hot according to the prevailing volcanic activity. The air in these mountainous regions reeks of sulphur and other noxious substances, and is at times unsafe to breathe.

Scholars speculate that Mu's exceptionally volatile substratum presages disaster for the continent at some time in the future. Earthquakes of medium to heavy intensity have long been reported by the nearby Elysium islanders, who fear that an increase in Mu's seismic or volcanic activity could force them to evacuate their own homeland. The First Age Atlantean astrologer, Darus III, dared postulate even further in his esteemed book, **PROPHECIES**:

"Twice before has the continent of Mu risen from the sea, only to sink beneath the waves amidst a storm of fire and ash. Though it has risen again, so too will it once again fall into the sea.

CURRACURRANG



Bordering the tropical forests of Yallock to the east is the mountainous region known as Curracurrang. Like Lemuria's Golian mountains, the Curracurrang range is notable for its craggy peaks and sheer cliffs. Along the eastern coast the bluffs drop off sharply, forming an almost vertical wall against the sea.

Hidden amidst the western cliffs are the eyries of the winged folk, who name themselves the Zephyr. In his famed Muvian treatise, the First Age historian, Melkurion, has this to say of the Zephyr:

"They are a peaceful people, almost angelic in appearance and of stately bearing. Having already experienced some of the harsher realities of life on Mu, it was with the greatest relief that we encountered these amiable folk. Though they knew nothing of us, we were greeted with smiles and friendly gestures.

With the aid of Phaeron's magics (evidently a minor spell caster assigned to the expedition) we were able to converse with them, and so learned that they called themselves the Zephyr. They invited us to stay with them, in order that we might learn their ways, and so that they might learn something of our own customs. This we elected to do, and in fact remained for nearly six months' time; after learning that it was our intention to explore the interior, the Zephyr feared so for our safety that they almost would not allow us to leave." Of Zephyr culture, Melkurion writes:

"They are a caring people, most sensitive to the needs of the very young, old, and infirm. Though fish, fowl and other game are plentiful in their domain, the Zephyr will not kill living creatures simply for food. Instead, they risk the dangers of the forest in order to obtain the fruits and berries upon which their people subsist. In lean times the strongest willingly forego their rations, that the weaker members of the group might survive.

Each of the Zephyr, as we found, has his or her own talent. Some are musicians, who spend their time playing and singing the most melodious tunes. Some are skilled in the weaving of baskets, clothes, and other useful items. Others are warriors, whose responsibility it is to protect the eyries against attack, and to escort those who gather food from the forest. Despite their slender physiques, the Zephyr are fine fighters, and are most skilled with the bow and javelin.

In truth, the members of our expedition could find fault with these splendid folk in only two respects: the nest-like eyries which the Zephyr live in (and in which we were allowed to stay) are built in such precipitous places as to strike fear into the hearts of any non-avian. As such, the Zephyr had to carry us when we wished to visit a nearby eyrie, examine the local flora and fauna, and so on.

Not that the Zephyr minded performing this task; in fact, quite the contrary. Most of them were so saddened by the fact that we had been born without wings, that they tended us like mother hens.The only other complaint, reflecting more the excesses of human nature than any Zephyr fault, was that the Zephyr do not drink."

THE KANAWALLA DESERT

The Kanawalla Desert (also known as *The White Desert*) is a trackless wasteland which occupies much of the central region of the continent of Mu, and is easily the largest desert in the known world. The Kanawalla has long been the subject of scholarly dissertations, none of which can match the first-hand account penned ages ago by the estimable explorer and historian, Melkurion of Atlantis. He states, in part:

"The White Desert of Mu is most aptly named, indeed. Its sands are like drifted snow, and stretch endlessly for as far as the eye can see. Upon testing, the soil was found to contain a high percentage of salt; this explains the almost total lack of vegetation in this area, and gives credence to the theory that much of the continent of Mu was once under water. If true, there may be some veracity to the Zephyr legends, which state that half-sunken sea vessels have been found in this arid domain. Though our expedition has found no such ships to date, the theory does seem to warrant further investigation." Further into the text, Melkurion comments on the area's native fauna:

"By and large, the desert seems nearly bereft of life, with the exception of sand fleas — a miserable nuisance — spiders, and a particularly dangerous species of scorpion. Deathly white in color, these arachnids are practically impossible to spot against the similarly-hued surroundings. All in our party will attest to the toxicity of the venom which these creatures bear, as one of our mules died only seconds after having been stung by a single scorpion. Exercising great caution, I caught several of these killers, and succeeded in draining nearly 1/4 dram of venom from each; an astounding amount for a creature which averages only three inches in length. The distillation of an antidote seems a remote possibility for now, as our party is understandingly short of volunteers for such hazardous research."

On other dangers:

"During the day the heat is such that a man will require no less than two quarts of water per day in order to avoid dehydration. Equally dangerous is the intense brightness of the sun, which, reflecting off the white sands, is sufficient to cause a type of 'snow blindness.' Unless one takes pains to shield the eyes with a hood or wide-brimmed hat, this condition (the duration of which seems to be limited to 2-12 hours) can easily occur.

Travelers in the White Desert would also do well to arm themselves with stout bows, for the reason that this area is occasionally visited by wyverns. Though we have seen no signs of intelligent life, the Zephyr repeatedly warned us to beware of 'snakes', which I have learned is Zephyr slang for a local species of saurian/humanoids. Judging by the description given by the Zephyr, these "snakes" would appear to be related to the fierce lizard-riders of the Gondwanan deserts (called Ahl-At-Rab by the Turanians). Again, we have seen no signs of any such creatures to date. In fact, many of us think the tale to be a tall one."

As this was the last entry in Melkurion's logbook (which was given to a merchant of Ophir by a Zephyr cheiftain), it is possible that the expedition actually encountered the elusive "snakes" whom the Zephyr spoke of. Certainly, and in any case, Melkurion and his party never returned from their sojourn into the Kanawalla Desert.

THE TARA MOUNTAIN RANGE

Winding along the northern coast and across the interior of Mu is the Tara mountain range. With the exception of certain small species of rock-climbing lizards, the only creatures known to inhabit the volcanic hills and peaks of Tara are wyverns, firedrakes, and wyrrms.

Explorers in this region report that the physical obstacles to travel are substantial, but not insurmountable. Intermittent eruptions can be a hazard, but only to parties incapable of swift movement. The smoky and acrid air, while most unpleasant, does not usually pose a threat to life. For the most part, avoiding the largest and most active volcanoes will prevent exposure to the more toxic (and sometimes super-heated) vapors which occasionally spew forth from the roiling subterranean depths. Rivulets of lava and slow-moving masses of red-hot magma are generally perilous only to the incautious.

Those who succeed in overcoming these obstacles can expect to enjoy the fruits of their labors, for the Taras are known to be a rich source of geodes. These globular chunks of rock are expelled in semi-molten form from the volcanic hills and mountains of this region. When cooled, they resemble ordinary, roundish rocks; if broken open, however, it will be seen that each geode is filled with a dazzling array of crystals. While most (75%) Tara mountain geodes are comprised solely of quartz crystals, some (76-95%) may contain up to a dozen amethysts, sards, chrysoprases, or other semi-precious, crystalline stones. Rarer (96-100%) but not unheard of are geodes containing 1-20 carat rubies, emeralds, and even diamonds. As a typical day's prospecting can yield dozens (1-12 x d6) of geodes, explorers in the Tara mountain range, while far from numerous, grow less uncommon with each passing year.

YALLOCK

Sprawling across the eastern half of the continent is the great tropical forest known as the Yallock. Here, under towering eucalyptus trees, grows an incredible profusion of plant life: giant ferns, graceful palms, copses of bamboo, mango, and betel-nut; bitter orange, clove, nutmeg, and cinnamon. Three rivers: the Onala, the Fromm, and (farthest to the south) the Currang flow through the forest, which supports an equally wide variety of animal life; parrots in allhues of the rainbow, gibbons, orangutan, and vine snakes in the trees; python, komodo dragon, wild boar, and dhole (fierce, wild dogs) along the forest floor.

The masters of Yallock, however, are not beasts or even men, but the vile creatures known as the *Naga* (reptilian humanoids). Followers of the snake goddess, Tiamat, the Naga are an ancient and evil race steeped in the practices of black magic. They despise all warm-blooded creatures (whom they consider their inferiors), and possess the ability to communicate with and influence all species of reptiles.

Though legends abound of the Naga and their rulers, the dreaded Nagaraja (half humanoid/half serpent), what little information we do possess has come almost exclusively from the Zephyr, who dwell atop the cliffs of nearby Curracurrang. Melkurion of Atlantis, the First Age explorer who lived amongst the Zephyr for six months (before disappearing into the Kanawalla Desert), left us this brief but provocative account of the Naga:

"According to the Zephyr, there is an ancient city of stone which lies hidden in the Yallock interior. Here, they say, dwell the serpent-headed humanoids known as the Naga. The Zephyr and Naga are mortal foes; the serpent men set traps for them in the treetops, or use nets to try to ensnare them when they alight. The Zephyr, though seemingly a peaceful folk, attack the Naga on sight. The few Zephyr who have managed to escape from the Naga describe their captors as being both sinister and bestial. They subsist on the blood of mammalian creatures, which they drink from cups of hammered gold. After being beaten and tortured, their captives are thrown into bamboo cages, there to await the time when they will be sacrificed to the evil goddess, Tiamat."

Of the city itself, even the Zephyr know little. Those with some knowledge describe it as labyrinthine in appearance, with winding streets and many one to two story buildings. Where or how the Naga quarried the stone for these structures, the Zephyr appear not to know. The theory that the city was erected before the Naga arrived in Mu (put forth by one of the elder Zephyr males) is intriguing, if perhaps somewhat fanciful.

Implements captured from the Naga and shown to us by our Zephyr hosts likewise proved to be of interest. The curved daggers, carried-so we were told-by common Naga warriors, were finely wrought. All were adorned with gold, many having serpent-headed pommels, some with rubies or other precious stones set in the eye sockets. Numbers of jeweled pendants, rings, and armbands were also shown us, any of which would fetch a fine price in a civilised land.

Perhaps most interesting were the raiment and personal effects of a Naga wizard, which by their appearance might be worn or used by a man, provided he was of above-average height. Incredibly, the creature's silken vestments and head dress were remarkably akin to the costumes worn by the priests of Qaddan's infamous snake sect; an observation which, as one can imagine, caused much speculation on the part of the members of our expedition."

Curiously, Melkurion makes reference to the Naga using wyverns as steeds, but never states whether this practice is widespread or, as others have claimed, limited to certain elite warrior bands.

THE FORGOTTEN SEA

"Steer south from the Fangs of Lemuria," says the ancient seaman's tradition, "with the Twisted Cross above your bow. There shall ye find the wonders of the Lost Land." Few have braved the perils of the vast ocean known as the Forgotten Sea in recent memory. Though most seafarers of the eastern hemisphere are familiar with the location and reputation of the Forgotten Sea, there are only a few obscure stories out of the ancient past to suggest what may lie there.

The Lost Land of the old navigator's instructions probably refers to the continent of Mu. The great, largely desolate land mass is little known outside the isles of the Elysium Sea, and only the most ancient maps show the shape and location of the land with any degree of accuracy. It is a mysterious, sparsely inhabited continent, and most of the reports from travelers who have visited the land have contained as much fancy as fact.

The Forgotten Sea includes all the waters south of Punt through the Isles of Ozar, Lemuria, and Mu, all the way to the Isle of Dreams. The Nether Realm forms the other edge of the sea. In the west, it merges imperceptibly with the southern reaches of the Atlantean Ocean; to the east lies the Stygian Sea, which is even more terrifying in reputation than the Forgotten Sea itself. All told, the sea wraps around two-thirds of the globe.

The southern expanses of the Forgotten Sea are choked with icebergs and ice floes. Many varieties of whales, seals, and sea lions are reported to inhabit these waters, along with large, flightless swimming birds that congregate on the ice to breed. Close to the Nether Realm, it is said, strange elemental and demonic creatures roam the waters, delighting in the destruction of ships and the deaths of sailors.

An old tradition claims that there is also a race of friendly Sidhe living in the far south, a forgotten race of nymphs. The Ice Nymphs, as they are called, are supposed to inhabit icebergs, floes, and the great ice sheets. Legend says that they are born, age, and die with the *mass of ice they are associated with, much like dryads and their trees.* Seafarers believe that the Ice Nymphs can command the weather in these waters through ancient magic, and will use their power to curse any ship's crew which causes them harm (by building fires on the ice, for instance), or to aid those who do them a good turn.

THE ISLE OF DREAMS

Located off the southeastern coast of Mu, the Isle of Dreams is one of the strangest places in the known world. By all appearances the island seems a veritable paradise; fields of many-colored blossoms sway at the touch of gentle breezes. Groves of fruiting trees lie nestled amidst hillocks of cool, green grass, and crystal springs and waterfalls dot the landscape. Here one need only walk a short distance to find all manner of succulents, berries and herbs, each possessed of the most subtle and distinctive flavours.

For all its splendor, however, the Isle of Dreams remains a place of mystery. Though the island is not known to harbor dangerous creatures of any sort, the natives of the neighboring islands consider the place taboo, and will not set foot upon it. The Zephyr of Mu are loathe to even fly above the island, claiming that it is haunted by deranged spirits. According to Khitan legend, the isle does not truly exist, but is an illusion created by a wise and powerful dragon to lure foolish mortals to their doom.

The only reliable written account of this region, the famous logbook of the traveling sage, Ahmahd of Joktan, is in itself a puzzlement. In it, Ahmahd states:

"Contrary to the tales told us by superstitious natives, we have found the island to be a most enchanting place. Beauty abounds, and riches beyond one's wildest imaginings are to be had for the taking: costly herbs and spices, trees which give forth golden fruits, magical pools and grottos, nymph-like maidens of surpassing charms . . . everything one could wish for is here on this Isle of Dreams. Would that I could spend more time ashore, but alas; it is my duty to oversee the ship's carpenters, who have been assigned to effect minor repairs upon our much-travelled vessel."

An entry made but two days later reads as follows:

"A series of strange events seems destined to cut short our visit to this island. First, the body of one of our Turanians was found hanging from the limb of a bow wood tree, his face contorted in a most hideous grin. A short time later, the ship's first mate leaped to his death from a towering bluff. Those with him prior to his death claim that he was in an especially high-spirited mood, and in fact was heard to be laughing even as he plunged to his doom.

Upon learning of these two events, our captain reportedly attempted to commit suicide by the implementation of some bizarre scheme involving a cask of wine and seven of the island's comeliest nymphs. Only a show of force by the ship's carpenters and myself succeeded in putting a halt to this madness.

When the captain came to, he seemed more like his old self, and so we began to try to round up the remainder of our crew. This task alone may take several days, as many of the men appear to be quite bereft of their senses. The slightest motion or spoken word is enough to send some of them into fits of hysterical laughter; others weep openly at the mention of leaving their new-found paradise. Oddly enough, a few who have spent time on the island seem quite unaffected. As for myself, I will be content to leave this place as soon as possible."

THE MISTY ISLES

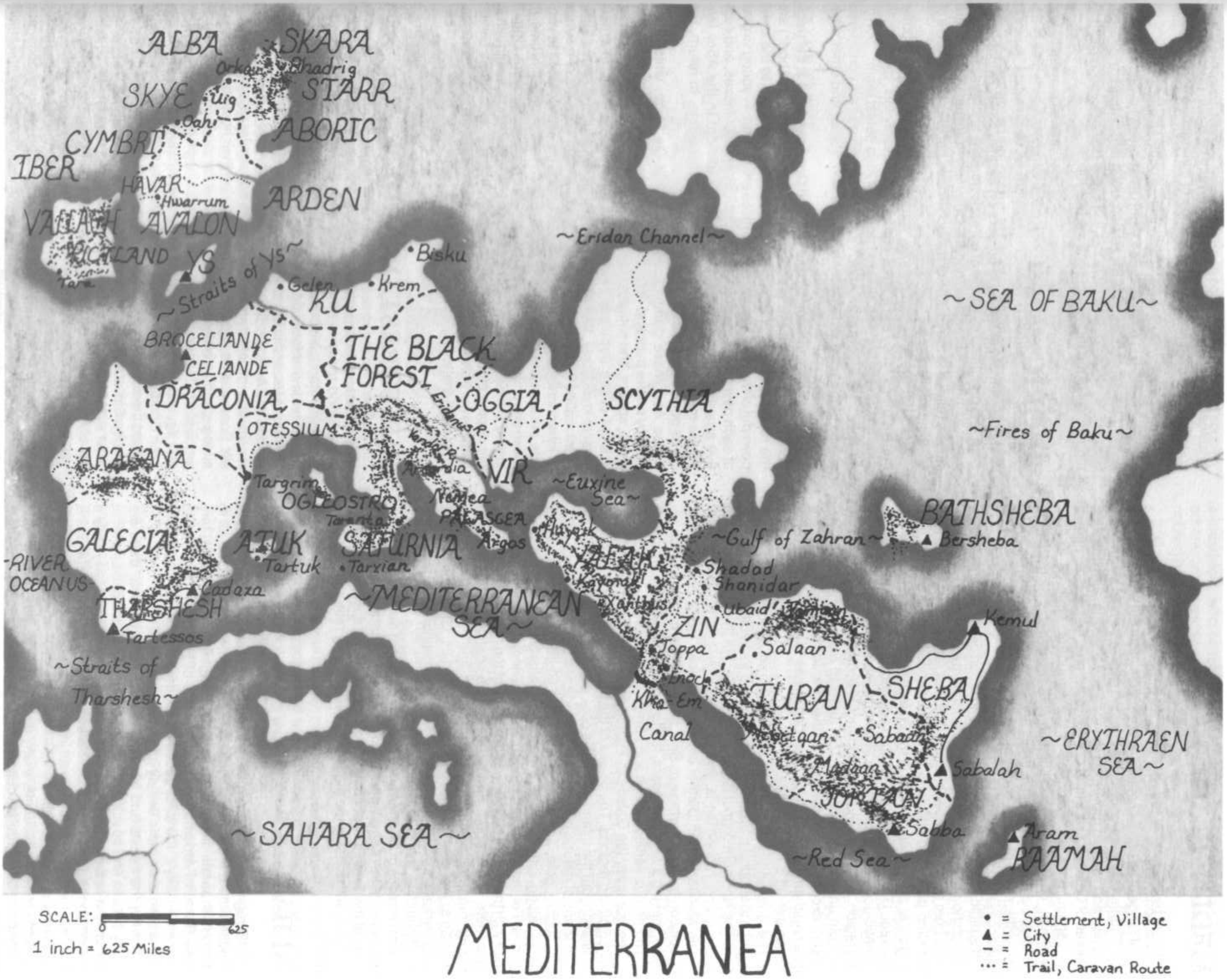
Few maps mark these strange islands, which are said to lie deep in the heart of the Forgotten Sea far from any other land. Every so often — the last time was nearly a century ago — sailors venturing into the unknown waters beyond the Fangs of Lemuria have reported sighting, or in some cases, actually landing on, one or more of the isles in this small archipelago.

All the descriptions agree that there are two large isles and seven smaller islets, close enough together that they can all be seen from the highest point of the larger island. They are described as being volcanic, built around two great cone-shaped mountains which were seen to erupt in at least two of the most trustworthy accounts. Mist shrouds them constantly - hence the isles' name - coming from geysers and vents in the volcanic rock. Accounts also agree that, though there is vegetation on the islands, only a few wandering seabirds have been seen in the way of animal life. An eerie quiet is said to hang over them, clinging like a tangible thing over their irregular landscapes.

But the various tales of the islands disagree on one important fact: the location of these mysterious islands. No two ships have ever found this archipelago by sailing the same route. A hundred years ago, in a deliberate attempt to find the islands after sighting them on a previous journey, one captain swept the seas in vain until his crew forced him to give up his quest.

This same captain swore until the day he died that, on his original visit, he and his crew found and hid a huge treasure in the sands of the northern beach of the largest island, a treasure salvaged from the remains of a partially sunken Sheban vessel. No sign of the crew, dead or alive, was found, though the captain often displayed an ancient Sheban coin as proof of his discovery.

Few people lend credence to these tales today. The Misty Isles are sometimes also written of as the *Isles of the Lonely*, and the *Wandering Isles*, and some sages have identified them with the Isles of the Lost, which are usually assumed to have disappeared beneath the waves during the Great Cataclysm.



MEDITERRANEA

ALBA
SKARA
Orkon
Rhadrig
STARR
SKYE
Uig
Oah
ABORIC
CYMBRI
IBER
HAVAR
Hwarrum
ARDEN
AVALON
YS
Tara
~Straits of Ys~
Bisku
Gelen
Krem
KU
BROCELIANDE
CELIANDE
DRACONIA
THE BLACK FOREST
Eridanus R.
OGGIA
SCYTHIA
OTESSIUM
~Eridan Channel~
~SEA OF BAKU~
~Fires of Baku~
ARAGANA
Targrim
VIR
~Euxine Sea~
Nemea
Taranta
GALECIA
ATUK
SATURNIA
Argos
Tartuk
Tarxian
-RIVER OCEANUS-
Cadaza
THARSHESH
Tartessos
~MEDITERRANEAN SEA~
~Straits of Tharshesh~
~Gulf of Zahran~
BATHSHEBA
Bersheba
Shadad
Shanidar
Ubaid
Xanthus
ZIN
Joppa
Salaan
Enoch
Kemul
TURAN
SHEBA
Canal
Sabaan
Sabalah
~ERYTHRAEN SEA~
Sabba
~SAHARA SEA~
~Red Sea~
Aram
RAAMAH
SCALE: 0 625
1 inch = 625 Miles
• = Settlement, Village
▲ = City
— = Road
... = Trail, Caravan Route

]

MEDITERRANEA

The continent of Mediterranea (MED-i-ter-AY-nee-a) contains a great range of terrains, climates, and peoples, from the arid deserts of the Turanian subcontinent to the forested river valleys of Vir, the rugged hills and wooded groves of Palasgea and Saturnia, and the great plateau of Galecea. It is a land of wilderness and, for the most part, of barbarism; only at the fringes of the continent, such as Sheba, Tarshesh, and Ys, are sophisticated cultures found. The rest of the continent is home to primitive tribes and dangerous creatures, with a few settlements of elves, dwarves, and other friendly beings located in inaccessible wilderland fastnesses.

It is difficult to divide Mediterranea into broad geographic divisions. Most scholars treat the Turanian subcontinent as an entity nearly separate from the rest of Mediterranea. The vast region of Scythia, a land of rolling grassland plains, is sometimes considered a second geographical area all its own, as is the Galecean peninsula to the west. Between Galecea and Scythia, the continent is often divided into two climatic/geographic zones, the Mediterranean region and the Northern region. These are the most commonly accepted divisions, but are far from universally accepted. The Turanian subcontinent is mostly desert, except for a coastal strip on the Turanian peninsula. Parts are less arid than the great desert that dominates Turan and Zin, but the region overall is inhospitable.

The grasslands of Scythia are bleak and desolate, but fertile enough to support herds of wild animals and a sizable human population. The Northern district is much the same, but the plains give way to some more rugged lands, and a few extensively forested stretches.

The Mediterranean District consists of those lands which border directly on the Mediterranean Sea. Here the sea moderates the climate, making a warm, pleasant, fertile region of mountains surrounding numerous settled valleys and narrow coastal strips.

The last area, the Galecean Peninsula, is drier and harsher than the adjoining regions. The coasts of the peninsula support extensive habitation, but the inland plateau is cool, dry, and far less hospitable.

In terms of natural resources, Mediterranea is not a very rich land. Tin, copper, gold, and silver are found in limited quantities in some areas, along with iron and a few other valuable metals and gemstones. For the most part, though, the continent has nothing to compare with the wealth of Gondwana or some of the other rich continents elsewhere in the world. It may be that the scarcity of resources in Mediterranea reflects a lack of exploration and exploitation, rather than an actual dearth of such valuable materials. Given the fact that Mediterranea's inhabitants, with only a few exceptions, are still somewhat primitive, this is a distinct possibility.

Most regions of Mediterranea support scattered human habitation, but there are few heavily populated areas. Only Tharshesh and some parts of the Turanian subcontinent are occupied by advanced human cultures, with most of the areas in between being rather thinly populated.

ALBA (AL-ba)

Although the island of Alba is usually considered to be a part of Mediterranea, it is so varied in climate, terrain and population as to warrant separate discussion. Its terrain ranges from the dense, tangled Forest of Arden to the rolling plains of Havar. In the north, in Skara and Skye, the land becomes rugged and bleak, though still possessed of an eerie beauty all its own.

Among the beasts and intelligent nonhumans of Alba, there are many breeds and species. Deer are common, as are cattle, sheep, goats, and wolves. Ogres are particularly common in Aboric, while a few dragons and firedrakes are believed to lair in the wilds. The Sidhe still have their own Alban domain in the Forest of Arden, one of the last refuges of the Faeric Folk.

As to human inhabitants, many peoples live in Alba, with a great variance in background, culture, sophistication, and beliefs. From the barbaric, ogre-worshipping men of Aboric to the advanced neo-Atlantean culture of Avalon, and from Havar's peaceful druids to the corsairs of Cymbri and Skye, the range of civilizations and outlooks extends over a wide scope.

Though Alba is not a large island it is subdivided into a number of separate regions. These include Cymbri (SIM-bree), Havar (ha-VAR), Arden (AR-den), Starr (STAR), Avalon (AV-a-lon), Aboric (A-bor-ik), Skara (SKA-ra), and Skye (ski). Each of these regions is described in more detail in the individual sections that follow.

ABORIC (A-bor-ik)

This region of central Alba borders on Skarra, Skye, Avalon, and Starr. It is populated by a tribe of barbaric humans known as the Abor, a light-skinned, dark-haired people. Originally from Iber, the Abor are closely related to the people of Uallach in Iber, but only in the sense of physical similarities.

The Abor are a hostile people, without friends among any other human tribes. They are a filthy, crude, and slovenly folk, dressing in rude furs and hides. The civilized people of Alba detest them; "Son of an Abor", "Manners of an Abor", and similar remarks are considered insults of the most derogatory sort in Avalon, Havar, and other adjacent regions.

These barbarians worship the Old God Og, though not in the traditional way. They believe that ogres (who are common in Aboric) are the representatives of their god, and so offer sacrifices to the most powerful of these monsters. All sacrifices are human — young virgins at each new moon, children at the solstices and equinoxes, and captive strangers/travelers/enemies (the same word in the Abor language means all three) whenever they are available. In return, the ogres generally leave the Abor alone.

The Abor have domesticated wild, wolf-like dogs, which they employ on the hunt and in combat. Their warriors use stone-headed clubs, spears, and slings, and wear "armor" of wolf or bear hide.

Most of the populace is scattered throughout Aboric in small, loosely-knit bands, though the Abor do have one fairly large settlement, called Ugmur (UG-moor). This settlement consists of a series of interconnecting caves with a number of entrances located in various parts of the surrounding countryside. The Abor often hide in these entrances and spring forth to capture unwary strangers. Ugmur is said to have great stores of loot gained from such attacks hidden in the depths of their subterranean lair. Though they give some choice items to the ogres as offerings, the Abor keep much of this stolen treasure for themselves.

THE FOREST OF ARDEN (AR-den)

The Forest of Arden is one of the few remaining haunts of the Sidhe in the world today — other notable ones being located in Iber and Saturnia. Although isolated groups of Sidhe can be found almost anywhere, realms actually dominated by the Faerie Folk are few indeed.

Arden is located in the east-central area of Alba, bounded by ocean to east, and Avalon to the west and south. The various Sidhe of Arden resent all forms of intrusion by humans and similar races into the forest. Some can be quite violent in expressing their hostility, and harbor a long-standing hatred of those who have forced them to give up so much of what they once held. Once the Sidhe owned all of Alba, Iber, and Ys, and ranged freely through Mediterranea, Atlantis, Turan, and even Gondwana. Now the *Other Folk* (as they call all non-Sidhe) have forced them to give up almost all of what they once held. Only in Iber are the Sidhe still populous, and only in Arden do they still prosper.

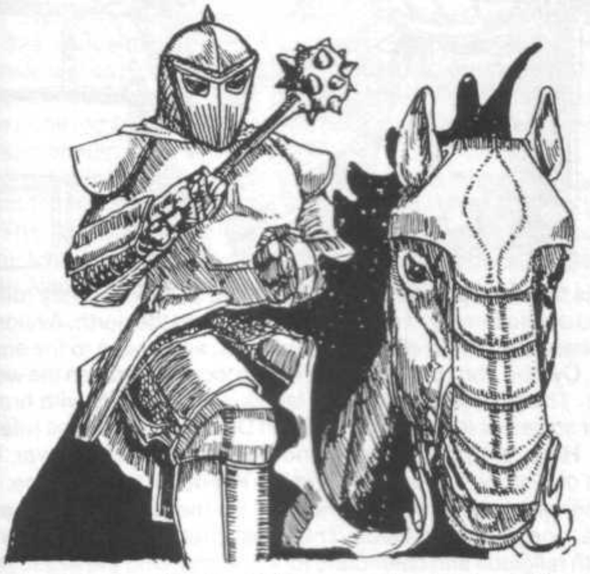
As a result, few Other Folk dare venture into, or even near, the Forest of Arden. Even outside the woodland realm, Faerie Folk seeking vengeance or a chance to reclaim lost land may roam in search of an opportunity for causing trouble. The Sidhe of Arden have withstood invasions and incursions by everything from giants to goblins, and their style of fighting (which makes use of ingenious traps and sneak attacks) is said to be most effective.

Down through history, there have been occasional cases of cooperation between Other Folk and Arden's Sidhe. For the most part, however, these cases have involved isolated individuals or small groups on both sides. The ranks of the Faerie Folk in Arden include sprites, rabicans (faery steeds), boggarts, oak men, and many varieties of nymphs. The oreads of the hills are especially dangerous to intruders, particularly small bands of adventurers who disturb the peace of the woodlands. Bands of druas (the so-called *Dark Elves*) are also said to roam Arden's forests, and many other types are represented in smaller numbers.

It is said that Arden has been ruled for many Ages by an absolute monarch known only as the Faerie Queen. This one individual (no one is sure of her name, or even of her exact race) has ruled Arden for a thousand generations of men, or so say the legends. Her rule is tempered by the strong force of tradition, the philosophy of the Faerie Folk supposedly evolving around the phrase "Things shall be as they ever have been."

All of the Sidhe in the land acknowledge the Faerie Queen as ruler of Arden, though some are less enthusiastic than others. The Sidhe have their share of squabbles among themselves, particularly between those who want peace and solitude and those who live only to be mischievous and cause trouble for the Other Folk.

AVALON (AV-a-lon)



Avalon is a small land, with Havar, and Arden furnishing the landward boundaries. A mighty walled city serves as the only settlement, built on an island in the River Usk and surrounded by farmlands, rolling plains, and forest.

The entire population of Avalon resides within this city, which has grown steadily since its founding some time after the First Age.

Legend has it that the Ruler of the Lost Kingdom sailed from Atlantis after tragedy struck his land (see: *THE HISTORY OF ATLANTIS* for details). With a band of survivors who lived through the cataclysm, this King fled by sea to Alba. There, with the help of the elves of Ys, they built a new city in the form of old Atlantis, smaller in size but similar in magnificence. Even today, Avalon seeks to bring back the peace, prosperity, and justice of the bygone First Age, though it is now quite independent of any ties with the mother country.

The first King of Avalon, in recognition of the help received from Ys, chose an elven princess as his Queen. Members of succeeding generations, right down to the present, retain certain elven characteristics such as fair skins, fine features, a 25% chance to possess any elven racial ability (see: **THE ARCANUM**). Intermarriage with elves has reinforced these traits, which have spread to include not only the royal family but many of the higher nobility as well.

Avalon's culture reflects both Atlantean and elven influences, and is as advanced as any in the known world. The people are a high-minded folk, who consider themselves somewhat superior to most others; intermarriage with outsiders (except elves and Atlantean nobles) is frowned upon, and considered scandalous.

The city-state's religion is henotheistic, officially centered on Atlas and Poseidon as patron deities, but recognizing the Old Gods and all the lesser divinities as well. The King employs both priests and astrologers as spiritual advisors. Aside from Astrology and Divine Magic, the most commonly practiced magical fields are: Sorcery, High Magic (wizardry), and Alchemy.

Avalon's highest social class, ranking just below the royal family, is that of the chivalry of Avalon. Knighthood is an important institution in Avalon, the King heading a group of elite warriors united in a brotherhood known as *The Order of the Grand Circle*. They take their name from the old Atlantean tradition of seating the King's Council at a round table, thereby eliminating positions of dominance or precedence in council. The round table itself is actually a ring with the center open to allow servants, musicians, and jesters to perform their duties unhindered.

The Order is led directly by the King, who is traditionally treated as a warrior comrade rather than as a sovereign by other members of The Order. They are an elite group, charged with the defense of Avalon and sworn to extend the influence of their "New Atlantis". Each member is considered a Paladin, and is sworn to uphold the high standards of the Order.

Avalon has a small but effective army, led by members of the Order. This force, made up exclusively of heavy cavalry armed with lance, greatsword, and mace, and wearing full armor, is employed to patrol the surrounding countryside. Small bands are dispatched as needed to drive off the Abor, predatory beasts, ogres, goblins, and other such intruders. A small navy is also maintained, consisting solely of ships purchased from Ys.

Avalon's stated goal is to unite the world under the New Atlantis, where noble thought and achievement will once again dominate the lives of all men.

The city of Avalon is wholly located on an islet, connected by bridge to the mainland fields and forests. Overall, Avalon controls little territory, but is desirous of future expansion. However, they are not a warlike people, and would prefer to gain dominance through peaceful means — diplomacy, trade, and moral or cultural ascendance. The current King seeks a voluntary union of neighboring lands, not an empire.

To date, they have had little success in their endeavors. Havar has little interest in cooperation with Avalon, though the two nations do occasionally engage in limited trade. The corsairs of Cymbri are also a problem for Avalon, forcing them to keep their ships close to the city. Ys helps share the burden of defense against corsairs in these waters, but their forces are relatively few in number.

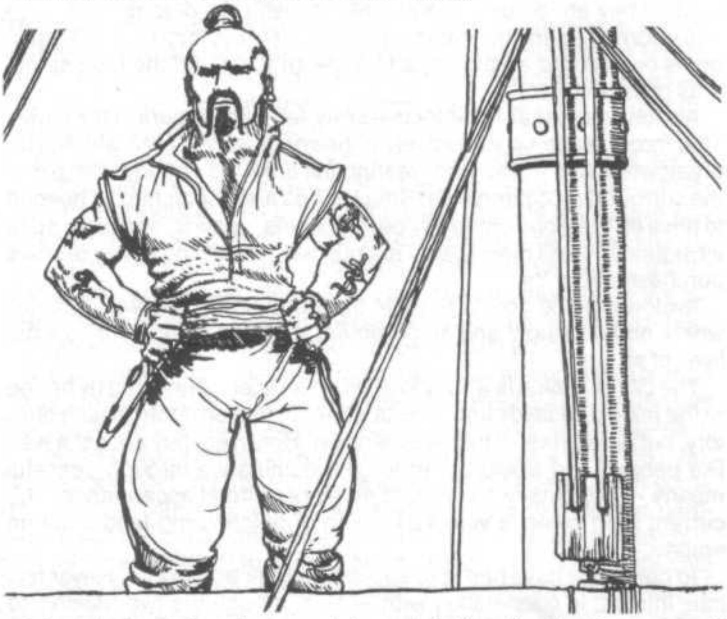
CYMBRI (SIM-bree)

Cymbri is not a true country, but a single, large settlement situated somewhere on the rockbound western coast of Alba. Its exact location has long been a closely guarded secret of the dread corsair bands who dwell there.

The original settlers of Cymbri were a mixture of Turanians, Dravidians, Vir, and various other Mediterranea and Gondwanan peoples taken as slaves by the Shebans in the early days of the Sheban trading empire. While en route to Tartessos in a fleet of five large slave galleys, the thralls revolted, took over the ships, and slew their captors. In order to escape the wrath of the Sheban empire, the slaves fled westward, eventually finding refuge in Alba. Here they established a stronghold, naming it Cymbri, after a hero of the revolt. To support themselves, and as a measure of vengeance for their ill treatment at the hands of their former masters, the Cymbrians turned to piracy as a way of life.

Since that time several hundred years ago, the Cymbrians have increased both in number and in strength. The crude, walled enclosure which once served as their base of operations is said to have grown into a city of widely divergent architectural styles. The Cymbrian population has also continued to grow, augmented by the constant influx of captured females (taken in coastal and sea-borne raids), escaped slaves, and disaffected individuals from all over the known world. The Cymbrian fleet, begun with just five captured galleys, is now believed to number well over forty vessels, of many different types.

As might be expected, Cymbrian culture is similarly notable for its diversity. Almost every religious belief has its adherents here, and the customs and traditions of many nations have become blended over generations of time. The few traditions native to Cymbri primarily reflect the legacy left by their slave ancestors. As Sheban slaves were made to shave their heads, so too do most Cymbrian corsairs (both male and female), though many retain a top-knot or narrow crest of hair as a symbolic show of defiance with the old ways. Whereas Sheban slaves were prohibited from wearing jewelry or ornamentation of any sort, the wearing of elaborate tattoos and costly jewelry has long been in vogue amongst the Cymbrians. Between the varying tastes in dress among the many races and nationalities represented in Cymbri (plus the adoption of clothes taken from captured merchant vessels), Cymbrian dress is colorful and wildly varied.



Though Cymbrians have an inherent dislike of authority, a council of three individuals serves to govern the city's interests and settle disputes. The council is elected by popular vote, each triumvirate serving for a period of seven years. Among other duties, the council decides whether or not any newcomer is to be granted Cymbrian citizenship. Almost any fugitive, thief, cutthroat, or pirate can apply for citizenship in Cymbri. An interview and some sort of test of loyalty — often a quest for some kind of valuable booty — is usually required before the council votes. It is also customary for applicants to offer the council a goodly sum of treasure or a gift of great value as an "application fee" of sorts. Those who are accepted are required to swear an oath of loyalty to the city, and a solemn vow of secrecy. The highest crime in Cymbri is to reveal the exact location of the city to an outsider (non-citizens brought to Cymbri for any reason must be bound and blindfolded to prevent such a thing from happening). Both pacts are considered binding for life; a Cymbrian citizen who later attempts to desert the city will be hunted down mercilessly by his compatriots. The punishment for either offense is death, usually by some horribly slow means.

The city of Cymbri actually remains little known to outsiders. Over the centuries, a few of its people have returned to civilization and escaped the vengeance of their fermer comrades, but even these people are reluctant to disclose more than vague generalities about the city. Cymbri is said to be a walled port city of formidable construction, well-guarded by hardened corsair warriors. Its exact location remains a mystery, though the determined seeker might possibly find it by locating a Cymbrian corsair or thief in some other city willing to sponsor him before the council. Most Cymbrians converse among themselves in a tiwsted version of the common thieves' cant. Called "Cymbri," this dialect is practically incomprehensible even to those who speak thieves' cant, and qualifies as a distinct language all its own. Some claim that a secret, written version of this tongue is also in use among the Cymbrians.

There are those who say that Cymbri is paid a substantial sum of gold and silver each year by Tharshesh in return for letting their merchant ships alone. Some even believe Tharshesh encourages raids against its rivals by these Cymbrian corsairs, though to date there has been offered no proof that such a conspiracy truly exists.

HAVAR (ha-VAR)

Havar is the most populous region of Alba, a land of gently rolling plains and dense forests. It is bounded by Skye to the north, Avalon to the northeast, the Forest of Arden in the east, and ocean to the south and west. Cymbri, the corsair haven, is also located here, on the western coast. The people of Havar are fair-skinned, usually with brown hair. Their society is druidic, and the High Druid of Havar is the ruler of the land. He is both the spiritual and political leader of Havar, the Guardian of History, the Teacher, and the Keeper of Stonehenge.

Stonehenge is a holy circle, grandest of the megalithic monuments to Hawwa, one of the Old Gods. This great circle of standing stones fulfills both religious and calendaric function, marking the passage of days, months, seasons and years by tracking the rising and setting of the sun and moon over various stones.

Foreigners seeking druidic knowledge come from around the globe to study under the High Druid; he teaches the secrets of Druidism, History, Music, Nature, and similar subjects. It is said that anyone may attend these lessons, so long as proper respect for the High Druid is shown, and behavior remains correct at all times.

Havar is a land in which strict religious codes and customs prevail. Foreigners, though welcome, may not discuss nor even show the symbols of any cult other than that of Hawwa. Out of respect to their druid leaders, the people of Havar do not wear furs or hides, and consider those who do to be barbaric at best. They subsist primarily on fruits, vegetables, and herbs, taking only such game as is absolutely necessary for their diet. Some portion of any kill must be sacrificed to Hawwa as a token of respect and gratitude. Despite these limitations, the Havar are skilled hunters and trackers, employing the short bow, dagger, and spear.

The Havar possess a runic alphabet, (taught by the druids) and place much emphasis on bardic skills and elemental magic. Their settlements are clean and well-ordered, and they have domesticated both cows and goats (mostly for dairy products, rarely for meat). They know little of metal-working, and make most implements from wood and stone.

Politically, the druids exercise complete control over the land. Havar is divided into four regions: Ashara (ash-AR-a), Aw (AW), Awtam (AW-tam), and Havoc (HAV-oc). Each is governed by an Elder Druid, who ranks above the druid chieftains of the region's settlements. The High Druid rules over all, an absolute monarch who makes all laws and is the ultimate arbiter of all disputes. The Elder Druids, however, control the selection of the High Druid's successor, and will combine to depose a High Druid whose actions threaten Havar's peace and order.

The settlements of Havar are all large communal shelters. They are circular, in homage to Hawwa, and are constructed of fine-crafted, sturdy oak. The largest settlement-house is called Hwarrum (ha-WAR-rum), and is 130 feet in diameter. It is ten feet high around the perimeter, rising to a center thirty feet above ground level. A second floor is located at the ten-foot level, and a small third floor twenty feet off the ground occupies the center of the large building. A central shaft ten feet in diameter connects the three floors from roof to lowest floor, providing ventilation. Within this single structure is an entire village, with shops, residences, and even a small tavern.

Of the four districts, Aw is the most prestigious, as Hwarrum and Stonehenge are located here. Awtum is the southwestern coastal region, through which trade passes to Ys and southern lands. Ashara is an eastern district, separating Awtam and Aw from neighboring Arden. A strip of the Arden border also runs along the boundary of Havoc, a contested region that arcs from northeast to southwest and is surrounded by Cymbri and Skye as well as Arden.

Havar is by no means a peaceful realm. The Cymbrians and bands of Ska frequently raid the borderlands, and Havar retaliates in kind. Havoc is thus a dangerous land, plagued by battles between warriors of all three nations. Further, the Sidhe who dwell in the Forest of Arden are none too fond of their human neighbors, and often interfere in the affairs of men.

Cymbrian ships harrass the entire Havari coastline, and warriors from the hidden citadel often trespass into Havar's territory.

The Ska of Skye rarely raid Havar by sea, but do mount short attacks through the landward marches. Havar's only close ties are with Avalon and Ys, both of them major trading partners.

SKARA (SKA-ra)

The windswept, rock-strewn terrain of Skara occupies the northern portion of Alba, bordering Skye, Aboric, and Avalon. In this bleak land of rugged hills and lonely moors live the Skara; light-skinned, dark-haired and of average build and height. Once closely related to the Ska of Skye, the Skara and Ska feuded generations ago and have since been separated politically and culturally.

The Skara are shepherds and hunters, but unlike their cousins from Skye, they do not much like the sea. What fishing they do is done from the shore, and they have no skill in building ships. They understand many advanced concepts of agriculture, but the harsh climate of the region favors only the hardiest crops.

Scarcity of food and raids from Skye, Aboric, and Cymbri have thus far conspired to keep the Skara population rather small.

Skilled in crafting blocks of slate, the Skara have built small but impressive settlements with paved streets and efficient sewer systems. Much of their furniture is likewise fashioned from cut and polished slate; tables, chairs, sinks, bureaus, and many other common items are made with careful craftsmanship.

As hardwoods are extremely scarce in Skara, almost all implements must be made from slate, flint, or sheepskin. In working these materials, the Skara are largely unequalled.

Scholars believe that the Skara were influenced by Atlanteans in their development of cities. The Skara themselves, however, retain no history of such outside influences. Their settlements are old, and the origins lost in antiquity. The most prominent are Orka (OR-ka), and Phadrig (FAD-rig). Each is ruled by a druid, with the High Druid living in Orka. Initiates preside over smaller settlements. The religion of Skara focuses on Hawwa, of the Old Gods, with Og also holding some prominence. Stone circles much like Stonehenge are found in several places in Skara.

The Skara are not a meek people. They organize raids into Skye and Aboric, and have even ventured into the territories of neighboring Starr. Unlike the Ska, Skara raids are usually mounted to steal food and animals, not to extend their territory or take captives (Skara is too poor to support slaves, so prisoners are impractical, at best). Hit-and-run raids are the rule, with little time wasted on unnecessary combat or killing. In battle the Skara use stone maces, flint daggers, and slings, and wear sheep or bear skin armor. Metal weapons captured from foreigners are highly prized, and considered a mark of esteem amongst the Skara.

SKYE (SKY)

The people of Skye are of the same race as those in Skara, having once all been part of the same nation. But differences arose between the two groups, and Skye broke off to pursue its own course. Skye occupies Alba's northwest coast, bordering on Skara, Havar, and Aboric. Those who live here call themselves the Ska.

Unlike Skara, Skye has fairly extensive woodlands, and thus has an advantage in using wood as a building material. The slate buildings found in Skara are not found in Skye; ordinary wooden structures are built instead. The Ska of Skye have no sewer systems, nor do they care much for the building of streets. They do, however, build ships, and are very much at home on the water.

The Ska began as hunter-gatherers, but long ago adopted the concept of seaborne piracy from the Cymbrians. Their corsairs bring in extra food and many luxuries, including metal implements, looted from the vessels and seaside settlements they plunder. Most Ska have various metal weapons or pieces of armor, either taken in battle or handed down from a successful ancestor. They favor longbows and battleaxes in combat, and when they cannot get metal weapons, use polished stone instead.

The Ska have laid claim to several islands off the coast. Frequent skirmishes break out between Ska and Cymbrian corsairs over the ownership and use of these islands, for despite the many similarities between these two groups they are hated rivals. Indeed, the Ska have no allies. They are more a nuisance than anything else, because their sparse population is unable to build sufficient strength to offer a serious threat to the northern trade routes. The settlements of Skye are Uig (u-IG), and Oa (O-ah). Uig is the largest, and residence of the Corsair Chief of Skye. A 90-foot-high natural pillar of solid stone is also located here, a colossal monument to the Old God, Og. Though widely held to be an object of some magical power, the monolith is avoided by the Ska, who shun religious practices of any sort. Some claim that a Black Druidic cult lives here, and uses the totem in its dark rituals.

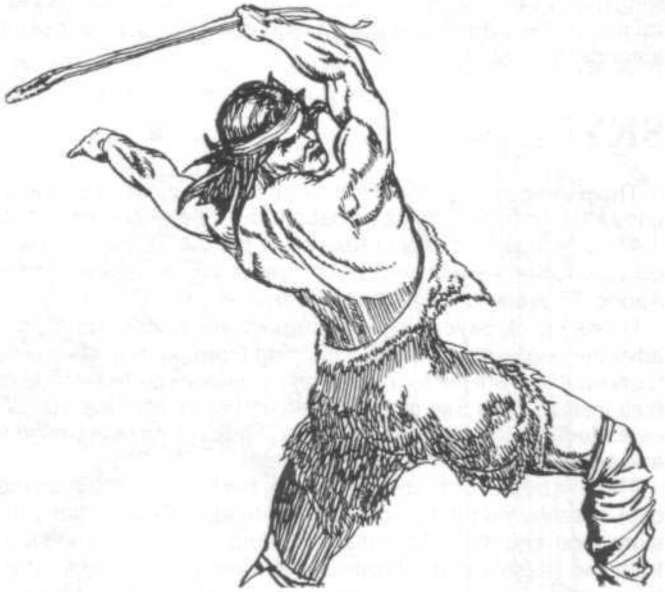
STARR (STAR)

This region lies on the eastern coast of Alba, bordering on Arden and Avalon. A very small tribe of hunter-gatherers lives here, semi-nomadic barbarians who migrate from upland pastures in the summer to southern woodlands near the fringes of Arden in the winter. They are tall, with brown skin and light hair, and dress in long, flowing robes.

The Starrians follow herds of Red Deer which live in the region. They use no metal, only stone, wood, bone, antler, and leather. Not particularly noted for their craftsmanship, they produce adequate tools and implements. They do not generally engage in trade, and shun contact with all but the Faerie Folk of Arden. They are pacifists by nature, following the tenets of an age-old mystic cult which revolves around the worship of the Old God, Tama. Unlike most of their neighbors, the people of Starr covet neither power nor wealth. Consequently, gold and other precious substances have little value amongst these peoples.

The Starrians are good hunters, but poor warriors. They lead a hard life threatened by neighboring tribes, and they are few in number. A peaceful people, they prefer seclusion over interaction when they have a choice. Oddly enough, the Sidhe of Arden generally accept the Starrians, and are friendly more often than not.

ARAGANA (air-a-GON-a)



Stretching in an irregular arc from the River Oceanus to the Mediterranean Sea, Aragana lies between Galecea (and Tharshesh) and the expanse of Draconea to the north. Most of the region is dominated by mountains.

The Aragan (AIR-a-gon) Mountains are home to a fierce hunter-gatherer tribe which has resisted all outside domination since the days of the Atlantean Golden Age. These people, the Aragani, generally have jet-black hair, brown eyes, and olive-skinned complexions. They are barbaric by most standards, being simple hunters, warriors, or druids. Only a very few have any knowledge of witchcraft or magic. A superstitious folk, the Aragani have a great terror of *the evil eye*. Otherwise they are utterly fearless, a warrior people equally as determined and ferocious as a Hesperian Amazon.

The Aragani wear crude clothing of animal skins, with rude cloth leggings. In battle they wear headbands of cloth or leather (dyed bright red), as well as additional furs that serve as primitive armor. Their favored weapons are spears, clubs, and staves, plus the sling, which is a weapon that has become a great specialty of their people. All their weapons are of good quality.

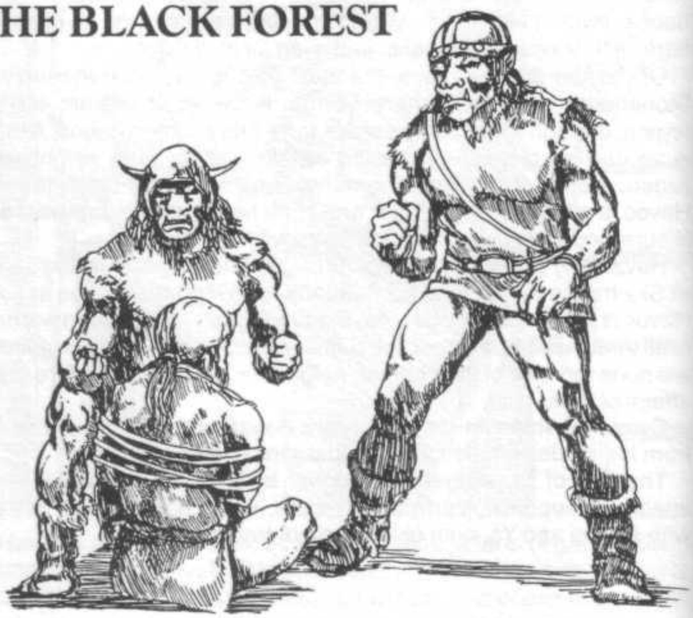
The Argani live in small, nomadic family groups. They build no permanent settlements, and only gather in large numbers during wars or for religious holy days. They worship Atta, one of the Old Gods, whose symbol (the bear) is held to be sacred. The cave bear, a common animal in Aragana, is likewise held to be sacred by the Aragani.

The Aragani druids perform sacred rituals within a circle of cave bear skulls surrounding a monolith carved to resemble a standing bear. These holy days are followed by week-long festivals, and are attended by most of the Aragani people.

The people are led by various individual chieftains, who in turn acknowledge the supremacy of the high druid, the leader of the Aragani religion. These simple hunters desire no one's land but their own, but are fiercely independent and resent any intrusion upon their soil. They are xenophobic, (distrusting all foreigners). An old Atlantean proverb speaks of the Aragani as being "as rugged and immovable as their mountain homes."

One group which is on friendly terms with the Aragani, largely because they leave the hunters alone, is the dwarven tribe that lives in the Citadel of Namtu (NAM-tu), which is built deep within one of the highest mountains in Aragana. The citadel is named for the king who led the dwarves to these mountains ages ago. The dwarves of Namtu mine metals, rare earths, and minerals from the depths beneath their small, well-constructed fortress-town. Trade between the Aragani and the dwarves has never been very brisk, for the food and herbs the Aragani can offer are hardly worth the exchange of metal weapons and implements they desire. Even so, the two groups are on good terms, and are pledged to mutual protection.

THE BLACK FOREST



The Black Forest is an extensive wilderness area located along the northern coast of Mediterranea. It is a strange and hostile region, populated by wandering tribes of nethermen, packs of *andaman* (beast-men) and such creatures of the night as vampires, werewolves, and spirits. The true power in this region, however, is held by the goblin hordes and their dreaded ruler, *The Erlking*.

Though known and feared throughout Mediterranea, The Erlking remains a figure shrouded in mystery and superstition. That he is the absolute ruler of Mediterranea's goblin population is certain; less certain is the exact nature of The Erlking himself. Some claim he is a demon, sent to earth by Mephistopheles to cause woe amongst mankind. The elves believe The Erlking to be a druas (one of the so-called "Dark Elves"), and a warlock of surpassing power. The dwarves (who claim to know him best) say that The Erlking is merely a large and hideous goblin, whose life span has been extended by the use of black magic. Whatever his true nature, The Erlking is a force to be reckoned with. From his dark fortress (located in some unknown part of the Black Forest) he commands nearly all of the continent's scattered goblin tribes. Wolf riders and other fell creatures convey his dictates to the tribes as they are decreed. Fearing the wrath of The Erlking's own army — said to number into the thousands — the goblin bands obey without question. It is said that The Erlking's influence extends to certain tribes of Nethermen, ogres, and even humans, all of whom pay tribute to the goblin lord in return for his protection. Wagons laden with the spoils of goblin, ogre, and nethermen raids are regularly sent to The Erlking's fortress by his "loyal" subjects; failure to pay such tribute (for whatever reason) brings the swift and certain wrath of The Erlking and his minions.

Due to the obvious dangers inherent in this region, few travelers dare enter the Black Forest. Although the gypsies of Oggia sometimes enter the edge of the forest in search of certain magical herbs, none will spend so much as a single night in this place. Others who occasionally frequent the region (most notably bandits, witches, and black druid cultists) do so either under the auspices of The Erlking, or at dire risk. Some claim that clans of druas dwell within the boundaries of this region, though others doubt the authenticity of such tales.

BROCELIANDE (bro-sel-ee-ON-de)

Broceliande is a small forest kingdom on the southern coast of Mediterranea, in the very heart of Draconea but not too distant from forbidding Aragana. Unlike the rest of Draconea, it is a land of peace and order, with well-tended groves and few dangerous beasts. Evil folk avoid Broceliande, especially the goblins (who have a superstitious dread of the woodland realm), for it is a haven of light and beauty in a dangerous and hostile land. Its capitol is the sylvan settlement of Celiande.

The kingdom is inhabited primarily by wood elves, tall (even by elvish standards), brown-skinned, with light brown or blonde hair. They are a graceful people, lithe and fleet of foot, who live in tree-top dwellings. These are simple platforms built among the branches, with living walls of carefully tended vines. The elves are noted as superb hunters and bowmen, and those of Broceliande are also known for their skill in creating wondrous goods, such as lovely clothes, the finest bows, beautiful musical instruments, delicate glasswork, and so forth. They are also masterful metalsmiths, second only to the dwarves — though the style and workmanship of the Brocelianden elves is unlike anything the dwarves produce.

The groves of Broceliande are also home to many of the Sidhe, especially wood and water nymphs. A few humans have settled here over the ages, most of them members of a druid cult which helps to tend the woods. Gypsy bands also wander into this land from time to time, though their visits are becoming less and less frequent each generation.

The King and Queen of Broceliande have reigned over their remote realm for many generations of men. Their policy has been one of withdrawal from a hostile world, and they are wary of outsiders. They trade with the high elves of Ys on a fairly regular basis, but except for the druids and the gypsies they have little contact with humans. However, some individuals claim that it is possible to win the undying friendship of the wood elves of Broceliande, if one is of good heart.

DRACONEA (dra-KO-nee-a)

Draconea (the land of Dragons) is the name given to the vague and ill-defined lands of central Mediterranea. Formerly, most of the continent was known by this name, but human expansion and encroachment have impinged upon Draconea's boundaries in recent centuries. Today the region still extends from the Mediterranean coasts to the River Oceanus, and dominates the interior of western Mediterranea. The Black Forest and the River Oceanus lie to the north, and the Oceanus also defines the western boundary. Aragana lies to the southwest, and the Mediterranean Sea (along with the coastal kingdom of Broceliande) is located to the south. In the southeast lie Targrim, Otesium, and Saturnia, with Vir to the east.

Draconea is not inhabited by humans, save for a few wandering nomads or foolhardy adventurers. Goblins, ogres, and all their cousins are fairly common, and the Draconean forests are reputed to be infested by a number of Great Dragons. The volcanos around Broceliande and Aragana are believed to shelter firedrakes. Less spectacular, but no less dangerous, are the mastodons, lions, and Mediterranean tigers of the land, all nearly extinct save in this last fastness of ancient wilderness.

Draconea is a wild land, untamed and without any dominant culture, political system, or population. Only those who actively seek danger or adventure come here. Once, Atlanteans hunted along these shores in search of trophies, but few of these hunters proved equal to the perils of the land, and the practice stopped after many failed to return. Shipwrecks along the Draconean coasts are also common, primarily because of the region's unpredictable weather (especially on the northern coasts). Survivors of such shipwrecks often find in Draconea a more terrible death than anything the sea could have offered.

Within the borders of Draconea are said to be the ruins of forts, trading posts, and small colonial settlements established by the First Age Atlanteans (and perhaps by the Amazons of Hesperia as well). Most are now overrun by a variety of evil, non-human inhabitants.

One, however, is said to still be inhabited by humans — the Citadel of Tok. Legends say that Tok is dominated by a secret brotherhood of sorcerers, twelve in number, who are masters of malevolent magic. Their twelve-towered citadel, constructed of rough-hewn stone blocks, is reputed to be a storehouse of fabulous magical items and arcane knowledge. But it is supposed to be ringed round with circular stone huts filled with ogres, goblins, and human slaves, who maintain and defend the Citadel. Armed only with slings and clubs, and unarmored, these slaves are only the outer defense; the real protection of the Citadel lies in the power of the Twelve Masters.

The elves of Broceliande have preserved some knowledge of Tok, though most references (save for those on ancient Atlantean maps dating back to the First Age) have long since been lost. It is believed by the elves to have been a refuge for a religious cult, now long forgotten, of either Atlantean or Hesperian origin.

GALECEA (ga-LEE-see-a)

The region that gives its name to the Galecean Peninsula is a large, roughly circular territory bounded to the north by Aragan, to the south and east by the Tharshi domains, and due west by the River Oceanus. The region is subdivided into two distinct areas (sometimes considered individual regions in their own right), the coastal strip of Ugala (uh-ga-la) and the great plateau region of Alamanazor (a-la-MAN-a-zor).

The plateau reaches almost to the coast; the high cliffs block the progress of moisture-bearing clouds inland, so that only Ugala receives very much rainfall. Alamanazor is a very dry plateau, mostly covered with scrub and sparse but hardy vegetation.

Volcanos ring the Galecean Plateau, almost defining the region's boundaries with its neighbors. It is said that Fire Elementals and spirits visit these volcanic areas to bathe in the lava streams, while Air Elementals and spirits are supposed to visit the upland heights. The plateau itself is reputed to be frequently traversed by Earth Spirits and Elementals.

Galecea is also the home of a variety of rare and monstrous creatures. Manticores, chimeras, and arcitenus (two-headed centaur) tribes are said to dwell on the plateau, and the ruins of past cultures common in Galecea are the haunts of ogres, trolls, and similar fell beasts. None are particularly common, but dwell in scattered lairs or bands across the face of the great plateau region. Less fearsome wild animals, including wild boars, aurochs, and the ibex also roam these arid lands. Small groups of barbaric humans, goblins, and other groups also make their homes here, and it is a place of refuge for various brigands, fugitives, hermits, outcasts, misfits, and certain disreputable spell casters, but there are no large communities, and no dominant cultures. There are, however, signs of ancient habitation. Galecea is dotted with windswept ruins, primarily of Atlantean and Hesperian origin, but in some cases left from lost, mysterious civilizations. These ruins are said to have both ancient treasures and secrets of great magical power hidden in their crumbling halls, and attract fortune-seekers and treasure hunters from Tharshesh, Atlantis, and even Hesperia.

IBER (I-ber)

The green island of Iber is a fertile land, with good soil and a delightful climate, but is feared by travelers nonetheless, and for good reason. Despite the bounty of the interior, which contrasts startlingly to the rugged and rocky Ibernian coast, Iber is no place for the faint of heart. Many types of dangerous creatures dwell here, such as *aegir* (swamp giants), dragons, spirits, dire wolves, and scattered tribes of goblins.

Sidhe are quite numerous; every type is known to haunt the dells and moors of the island. These faerie folk are scattered throughout the land in small groups of various types, with no definite organization or social order.

There are those who speak of a king, *Oberon the Immortal*, whose authority supposedly extends over the whole of Iber's Sidhe population.

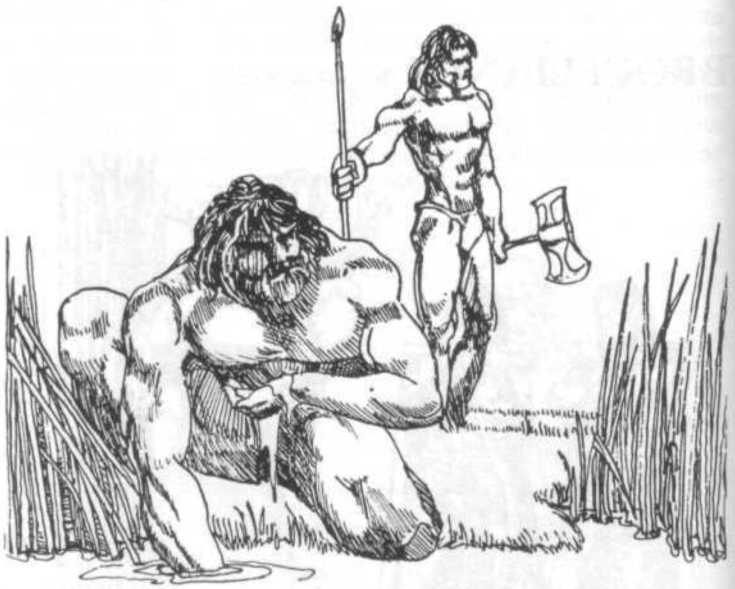
The Straits of Ayr (A-er) between Alba and Iber contain a number of tiny islets, most of them little more than pinnacles of jutting rock covered with sea moss. These rocky isles are home to the Ayr Tritons, a reclusive band of mer-people noted mostly for their druidic religion.

PICTLAND

The island also has human inhabitants, and these are the greatest source of danger for visitors. Much of Iber is dominated by the Picts, a race of barbaric nomads renowned for their ferocity and savagery in battle. A tall, strongly built people with light skin and dark hair, the Picts are distinctive in appearance. They stain their skins blue with woad (a natural pigment) and tattoo spiral designs on their bodies. *They are utterly without mercy, fiercely independent, and jealous of* their land and their freedom.

Roaming the land in nomadic bands, the Picts are not particularly advanced in either technology or social structure. They use stone, bone, antlers, tusks, and wood to make tools, utensils, and (most often) weapons. Spiral motifs — the spiral is the cult symbol of the Old God Ash, a dominant figure in Pictish myths — are incised on most possessions, but this is the only adornment found on Pictish implements.

Rank and position in Pictish society is entirely based on prowess in battle and on the hunt. The Warchief, the most skilled of the warriors, reigns supreme in each individual band. When warchiefs deal with one another, they revert to trials of strength to settle such disputes as may arise between them. These status duels are often lethal to one or both participants, even though neither is given arms; the concept of surrendering to an enemy is considered the most horrible act a Pict can commit, and results in the permanent exile of the offender from all bands of Picts throughout Iber. Such offenders are tattooed to permanently proclaim their cowardice, beaten severely, and turned out. Surrender to another Pict does not result in the same kind of punishment, but is looked upon as weakness.



The Picts fight among themselves more as a ritual than out of aggression, saving their warlike attentions for their neighbors. Non-Pictish settlements in Iber, especially Tara, are in constant danger, and the Picts have also been known to mount raids across the straits into Alba in odd hide boats that are seaworthy, but ungainly in appearance and handling.

UALLACH (oo-WA-lok)

In the north of Iber is another nation, a remnant of pre-Pictish habitation of the island. This small realm, Uallach is a center of Bardic lore, named after the greatest bardic poetess in recorded history. Druidic magic is strong in Uallach, and the forests and glens ring with music and poetry.

The people of Uallach are most closely akin to the light-skinned, dark-haired Abor of the Aboric region of Alba. They are a non-violent people, who rely on simple gathering and rudimentary agriculture for food. They make use of their powerful druidic magic to protect themselves from the Picts, who would otherwise have overrun the land ages ago.

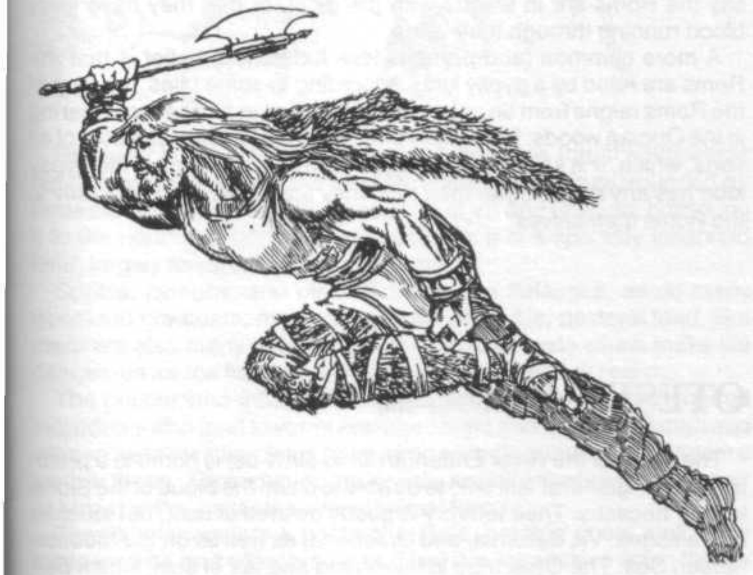
Uallach is traditionally a sacred place of learning and worship for bards and druids; even foreigners from Alban lands visit Uallach to learn the lore of this ancient, peaceful realm. Elder druids from many lands often settle here permanently, to live out their final days in *peace and pass on their knowledge to younger generations.*

The political system of Uallach is based upon the druidic settlement-leaders who form *The Ancient Order of the Council of Uallach*. One among these is chosen by vote to lead the delegation for a year and a day. This person also acts as the representative of the Council in all dealings with foreign realms, and is treated much like a monarch by these outsiders. But the Council has supreme power in establishing all laws, and in passing criminal or civil judgements relating to the citizens of the nation.

Though basically friendly with outsiders, Uallach has close ties only with Havar, in Alba, with whom they have much in common. Uallach's druids often visit Havar during the Great Festivals which are there. On the other hand, they have no love at all for the colony of Tara, and generally have little to do with most "civilized" peoples. They make judgements on an individual basis, helping those in need of aid, or turning away those whose attitudes are in conflict with druidic ideals.

Uallach is dotted with oak groves (Hawwa circles) and giant standing stones (Og monoliths). The people live in impressive stone slab shelters similar to those of the Skara in Alba, but even these strong dwellings would be little protection should the Picts ever overcome the magic that protects the land. Also dwelling in Uallach are many beastmasters, who live in solitary dwellings in the forests among the animals they befriend. Unlike the druids, these beastmasters are quite militant, and spend their time defending the forests — and those who dwell within — from Pictish incursions or other hostile forces. No one knows for sure how many such individuals dwell in the wilderness of Uallach.

KU (KOO)



Ku lies on the northern coast of the Mediterranean continent, along the shores of the Hyperborean Sea. The Black Forest, Oggia, and Scythia lie on the broad southern border of Ku in an uneven arc. It is a nation inhabited by human fishers and farmers, a loose association of settlements which cooperate with each other but are not actually unified.

The people are light-skinned, with blonde or brown hair. They closely resemble the Vanir of Hyperborea, to whom they may be related. They wear cloth tunics, belted at the waist, with tall boots and furs being worn in the winter.

A fairly primitive culture, the Ku know practically nothing of science. They mine lead, silver, and tin from three small mines in the wilderness of the interior, but they are not skilled metalsmiths; wood is their favored medium. Flint and other kinds of smooth-polished stone are the most sophisticated materials for locally-made implements, though these are beginning to be replaced by bronze and iron imports. Pottery is well developed and widespread, but strictly utilitarian in nature. Though they are not advanced, the people of Ku are gaining an increasing degree of exposure and sophistication in the ways of foreign cultures. They have extensive trade contacts with the outside world, though they primarily act as middlemen rather than providing any important resources of their own.

Amber is the key to Ku's trade position. There is a great demand for amber in Atlantis, Tharshesh, Ophir, and other southern realms. Though Ku has no native amber, they obtain it through trade with the Vanir in Hyperborea. Usually a warlike people who distrust outsiders, the Vanir allow Ku ships to pass freely through their territorial waters. They trade amber for herbs, cloth, wood items, and occasional luxury goods obtained by the Ku from other realms. Both groups benefit from this trade, and it may be that the theoretical blood-relationship between the two peoples has helped keep this link strong.

Merchants operating from the elven haven of Ys, mostly Atlanteans or Tharshesh's far-ranging traders, touch at Ku to trade metal implements, elvish products from Ys and Broceliande, and similar merchandise for the amber acquired from Hyperborea. Some tin, and jewelry made of silver, amber, shale, antler, bone, coal, and/or sea shells, are also exported. An overland trade route, through Oggia, Vir, and Targrim, also carries amber south through central Mediterranea.

Relations with Ys are excellent, as are those with the gypsy Roms of Oggia. There is little contact with the people of Alba, and what limited relations have been established have been very poor. Mostly, though, Ku gets along well with other peoples, and is rapidly assimilating the traits of higher cultures. Many of these have been rather haphazardly absorbed, often with contradictory results.

The population of Ku resides mostly in small stone-wall enclosed oak and pine villages along the coast. These include Bisku (BIS-ku), Krem (KREM), and Gelen (GE-len). Bisku is the largest, and the titular capitol of the nation. It is located entirely on a small island just 130 yards offshore, entirely encompassing the five acres of the tiny islet. A wood causeway leads from Bisku to the coast, where there is a small foreigner's ghetto. The other settlements are all much smaller.

The "nation" of Ku is a loose confederation of these village settlements. Each is governed by a six-man council. Periodically, all of the councils gather together in Bisku to discuss common problems, adjudicate disputes between villages, formulate policy, and so forth. Prices are established for trade goods, wages are standardized, and the flow of goods is thus regulated. There is no further attempt at unified government.

There is, however, a ceremonial "King of Ku." Once each year, at the Summer Fish Festival, a fishing contest is held. The man who can catch the largest haul is proclaimed "King of Ku," a title held for all of 24 hours. During this time, the man is treated royally, and any reasonable request he makes will be honored enthusiastically. A "King" who behaves in an arbitrary or cruel fashion, however, will be pulled down from his mock throne by the people, scourged, and escorted to the edge of the Dark Forest.

The people of Ku are excellent craftsmen of wood, and still make many utensils out of this medium. Though almost equally talented in weaving and in the art of making sails and nets, it is in wood that the craftsmen of Ku have earned the greatest reputation. Oak and pine are favorite materials, especially for buildings. (The Ku even pave their village streets with wooden billets.) All villages are built and laid out in the same fashion, with an oval stone wall surrounding joined rectangular buildings in east-west rows.

The Ku also build squat, wide-bodied ships and boats to ply the sea-lanes for fishing or to trade with Hyperborea. Their ships are constructed of animal skins stretched over wooden frames, a design many non-Ku find impossible to accept as seaworthy vessels. The flexible, treated-leather hull is very resilient, and rough seas are weathered easily without smashing the framework. These ships leak almost continuously, but the leaks are slow enough to allow them to be bailed out before the water becomes a real hazard. With an ever-shifting hull and a framework held together by ropes alone (a design that causes foreign shipbuilders to curse, laugh hysterically, or shake their heads with disbelief), the footing in these vessels is uncertain at best. Most non-Ku who try to take passage in these odd little craft spend much of the voyage hanging on for dear life.

The Ku are expert cod-fishers, using lines and nets strung between fishing craft. Large supplies of fish keep all the villages fed year-round, supplemented by shellfish and mollusks gathered along the coast and simple but effective agricultural techniques. Hunting is sometimes attempted, though the Ku are not particularly adept at this skill. Their favored weapons include bows, spears, harpoons, axes, and mallets.

Despite many changes in culture, the Ku retain their druidic cult of the Old Gods, with a pantheon headed by Eloah and Hawwa. These two deities are worshipped primarily as the Sun and the Moon respectively. As a result, the Ku reckon day and night as separate time periods, and have both a solar and a lunar calendar.

The people cremate their dead, following an age-old tradition. The ashes are placed, with much ceremony, within truncated, cone-shaped burial pots. These are buried during the twilight when Hawwa shows her full face, and is rising as Eloah sets to westward (on the night of the full moon). The Ku believe that the "Stairway to Heaven" stretches to the Earth on this one night of the month, allowing the wandering souls of the dead to gain entrance to heaven.

The druids of Ku are an elitist group separated from the rest of society. They live in sacred groves along the inland boundary with Oggia. They are prominent figures in society, for they are believed to intercede with the gods for the rest of the population. The Ku supply all the needs of the druids freely, but the druids take little active interest in the society or politics of the nation.

OGGIA (O-jee-a)

The forest lands of Oggia are located in the northern central region of Mediterranea, and border the neighboring territories of Ku, Scythia, Vir, and The Black Forest. Unlike the dark and tangled expanses of the Black Forest, the woods of Oggia are most pleasant. Here the forest floor is carpeted with sweet-smelling herbs and mosses, the verdant glades interspersed with sunny patches of meadowgrass and copses of flowering shrubs. Game is plentiful; pheasant, grouse and deer roam the woodlands, and the streams and brooks are teeming with fish.

The primary occupants of this wooded domain are the colorful folk known as the *Roms*, a wandering tribe of gypsy nomads. Originally from either Turan or Mohenjo-Daro (accounts differ on this point), the Roms are believed to have settled in Oggia sometime around the beginning of the First Age. They are a dark-skinned, black-haired people, fond of brightly colored clothes and all manner of jewelry and baubles.

The Roms travel throughout Mediterranea in painted wagons drawn by teams of horses or mules. Much of their time is spent in gaiety; song and dance are most popular amongst the Roms, as are acrobatics and a wide range of entertaining skills. The Roms also have a great fascination for magic, and many seem to possess some little talent in this field.

By profession, most Roms claim to be either performers, fortunetellers, herbalists, or artisans (Rom silver and goldsmiths are respected throughout much of Mediterranea). Indeed, their caravans resemble nothing so much as traveling circuses, ambling from village to town, selling their trinkets, baubles, and elixirs, and performing at local fairs and festivals. They are generally regarded by most Mediterraneans as simple but harmless vagabonds; eccentric, perhaps, for they never seem to remain in one place for any length of time.

In point of fact, the Roms are a sly folk who possess a most unique outlook on life. Stated simply, the Roms believe that the gods have bestowed upon them the right to steal or pilfer as they wish. Though the Roms are traditionally honor-bound not to steal from each other, anyone or anything else is considered fair game.

As a result, most Roms are adept at one or more thieving skills, such as picking pockets, conning, tailing, forgery, lock-picking, scaling walls, and so on. Many are accomplished rogues, harlequins, or charlatans. Though the Roms love nothing more than a clever scam or an easy heist, they do not condone violent or cruel behavior of any sort. Roms who engage in such behavior are expelled from the tribe, often after being branded as an outcast. (An inverted pentagram is the most common mark, applied either to the forehead or chest.)

As the Roms are by nature a secretive folk, little is known of their religion, culture and traditions. Because they are such a colorful (if not always well-loved) race, there has been much speculation concerning Rom customs and mores. Many consider the Roms to be promiscuous, especially their dark-haired, dark-eyed womenfolk. Some say the Roms are in league with the devil, or that they have faery blood running through their veins.

A more common (and perhaps less farfetched) belief is that the Roms are ruled by a gypsy king. According to some tales, the king of the Roms reigns from an oaken throne located in an obscure clearing in the Oggian woods. His subjects come to him to settle disputes of all sorts, which, it is said, he does with uncommon wisdom. If the gypsy king has any duties other than this, they are currently known only to the Roms themselves.

OTESIUM (o-TES-ee-um)

The valley of the River Eridanus (air-ih-DAN-us) is home to a primitive hunter-gatherer folk said to be able to claim the blood of the Sidhe in their ancestry. Their territory is poorly defined at best, but touches on Palasgea, Vir, Saturnia, and Draconea, as well as on the Mediterranean Sea. The Otesi tribe is fair-haired and fair of skin, which perhaps supports their claim to human and nymph ancestry. Their outlook on life is more like that of the Sidhe than most humans, for they are content to live in harmony with nature.

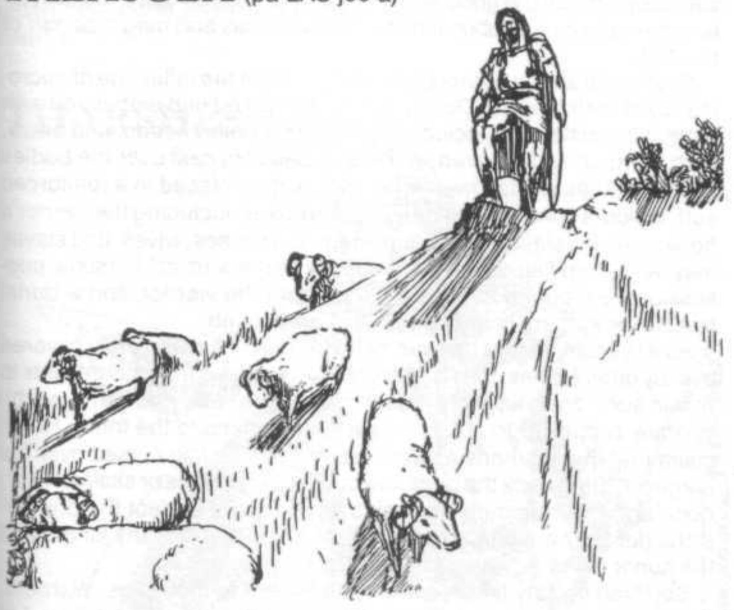
They gather figs, olives, grapes, and berries of all kinds, and hunt for food. They roam the valley in extended family groups, without permanent dwelling places.

Each group is independent of the others, though most are interrelated. Family groups are ruled by the oldest surviving family member; age is respected above all other things in Otesi society, and the tribe as a whole listens with respect to the eldest of all their people. The Otesi are very long-lived, and elders over a hundred years old are not uncommon. They age slowly, but despite their claims to nymph blood they are probably neither immortal nor perpetually young.

The Otesi use implements of stone, wood, and bone, fashioning clothing and tents from furs and skins. They use spears on the hunt, and are aided by domesticated dogs in tracking and pursuing prey. In their very infrequent battles (usually against marauders from Vir or Draconea) they use spears, stone maces, and thrown rocks, and have trained their dogs to fight alongside them. They have never developed the sling or bow, apparently from pride in their skill with the spear.

Otesium is rarely visited by foreigners. The Otesi are more accustomed to dealing with nymphs, satyrs, and similar races than are most humans. Traders from Tharshesh approached the Otesi generations ago, but found nothing worth trading in their simple land and quickly departed. Now, though Otesium is close to the trade lanes, it is rarely visited by foreigners. From time to time tribesmen from Vir will visit Otesium, usually on adventures, but this is usually the extent of outside contact with the land.

PALASGEA (pa-LAS-jee-a)



Palasgea is the smallest of several peninsulas thrust southwards out of Mediterranea into the Mediterranean Sea. It is surrounded on three sides by the sea, with the regions of Vir and Otesium bordering it to the north and northwest respectively. It is a sparsely inhabited land, largely forested, and rather rugged.

Sprites, nymphs, and other Sidhe live in Palasgea, as do many woodland creatures, making Palasgea an idyllic, pastoral land. But there are also many savage and dangerous beasts which make life dangerous for the humans who live in this wilderness realm.

The people who inhabit Palasgea are olive-skinned, dark-haired individuals who tend towards average height and build. Both men and women wear their hair long, tying it into a single queue or pigtail with a leather thong. Their clothes are simple, usually made from goat-hair or hides; in the winter they wear animal furs.

The Palasgeans are a pastoral people, herding goats and some cattle for food and other products. They are aggressive when threatened, but are otherwise friendly and hospitable. Their civilization has not advanced to the point of metalworking as yet, but their stone implements are of good workmanship and quality. They build simple huts of wood or stone, with thatched roofs, and bury their dead in elaborate stone cairns. The Palasgeans live simply, eating lamb and goat, cheeses made from goat's milk, olives and grapes, and occasionally adding wild game to their diets by hunting. Favored weapons both for hunting and for combat include spears, axes and knives made from flint or other stone, and shortbows. The inhabitants of Palasgea divide their region into several territories on the basis of traditional minor tribal holdings. The most populous of these territories are Peloponnesus (pel-o-po-nee-sus) in the south and Oguges (og-WA-jees) in the north. The other territories include Arcadea (ar-KAY-dee-a), Nemea (NIM-e-a), and Argos (AR-gos).

Arcadea is the most peaceful and pastoral region of Palasgea, and is the primary dwelling-place of the Palasgean Sidhe. Although humans do live here, they are few in number and tend to be almost as shy and reclusive as the nymphs and sprites who frequent these same woodlands.

Argos includes several swampy areas, especially the great Lernan Marsh. Hydras breed in these swamps, and are something of a problem, but are not so numerous as to pose any major threat. They are a dangerous nuisance to travelers all the same.

Perhaps the most feared district in all Palasgea is Nemea, home of the creature known as the Nemean Lion. While these frightening beasts are found in many parts of Palasgea, Vir, and Saturnia, nowhere are they so common as in the Nemean Vale.

All in all, Palasgea is a backwater area far removed from the tensions of the Great Powers that strive to extend their influence in the Mediterranean Sea area. Aside from an occasional marauding corsair or lost merchant ship, few outsiders even visit Palasgea. Only bands of Vir hunters interact with the Palasgeans on anything remotely like a regular basis, and the Palasgeans are quite content for things to remain that way.

SATURNIA (sa-TUR-nee-a)

Saturnia is another of Mediterranea's southward-jutting peninsulas. To the northwest, Targrim borders the region, while Otesium and Draconea lie to the north. The rest of Saturnia is surrounded by parts of the Mediterranean Sea with the colony of Tarantha to the south.

The human inhabitants of Saturnia are few in number, and are virtually identical in appearance and culture to those who dwell in Palasgea. They are concentrated, for the most part, in the fertile valley of the Eridanus. Tharshesh has established a few trading outposts along the coasts of the peninsula, to exploit the local timber resources and to serve as havens for ships engaged in trade with Yalak and Qaddan. But most of Saturnia is still untouched by man, and remains a realm populated mainly by nymphs and other Sidhe.

The nymphs of Saturnia guard their woodland domain jealously against human intrusion. They hate and fear the traders of Tharshesh, who despoil their forests and actively seek the expulsion of these and all humans who have encroached on their land, except for those of Otesium. The humans of this small territory (who are said to have a fair share of Sidhe blood themselves) are on good terms with neighbors, but there is still very little interaction save on an individual basis.

The most sacred spot in Saturnia is the Vale of Avernus (A-ver-nus). The River Alphaeus (al-FAY-us) has its source here, and plunges deep into the earth, ultimately emerging (so it is said) in the fabled subterranean realm of Xanadu (ZAN-a-du). Avernus is widely referred to in legends as the gateway to the Underworld.

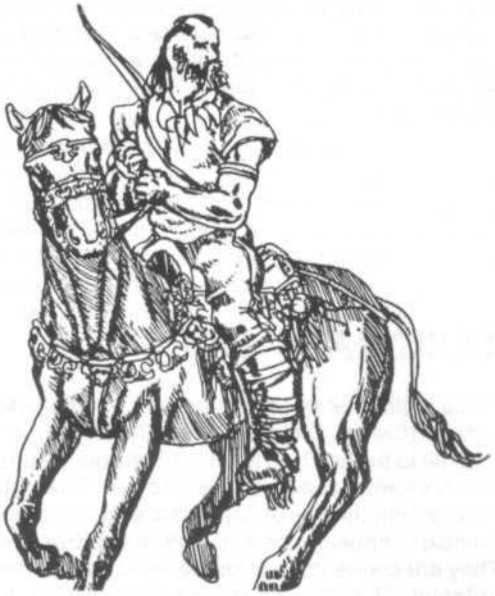
Travelers have also reported the presence of early Atlantean ruins along the western shores of Saturnia. The nymphs claim that any who visit these ruined First Age cities will awaken a terrible curse from the ancient past. They will do anything they can to prevent adventurers from reaching these lost cities.

SCYTHIA (SKITH-ee-a)

The largest single region on the Mediterranean continent, Scythia is a land of rolling plains and harsh steppes. Ku, Vir, and Oggia all lie to the west, while the Wilderness of Zin on the Turanian subcontinent borders southern Scythia.

The Hyperborean Sea lies to the north, the Sea of Baku to the east, and, sharing the southern border, the Euxine Sea gives Scythia an outlet into Mediterranean waters, though the treacherous straits of the Symplegades make passage dangerous at best.

Physically, Scythians are short, somewhat bowlegged, and wiry. Their skin is olive-brown, and they shave their heads, leaving only a scalplock and (for the males) bedraggled beards. They hardly ever wash themselves, and sophisticated foreigners have been heard to remark wryly that their horses smell better than they do. They wear clothing made of skin and hide, with breeches, hair shirts, and round, furred caps. Ornaments made of horn adorn men and women alike.



The horse-nomads of Scythia are almost constantly on the move. They are rarely in one place for more than a week before moving on. A Scythian band on the move is like a huge mobile city, led by warriors and other men on horseback. More horses pull the village yurts, conical tent-huts built of felt, reeds, and a framework of poles and set on wheels (women and children ride in these). Other horses follow without riders, herded along with the flocks of goats and sheep which provide most of the food, clothing, and other necessities for the band. Other warriors herd these animals in the wake of the moving community.

The Scythians consider themselves to all be members of a single tribe, but they roam the country in hundreds of smaller bands. The members of these groups may shift from one band to another as they wish, with complete freedom to come and go as desired. Scythian philosophy holds that the group exists solely for the benefit of the free-riding individual, not the other way around.

The Scythians are barbarians, pure and simple. They herd animals for food, but also hunt. As one traveler once observed: "The Scythians hunt as if they were at war, and wage war as if it were a grand hunt." Large numbers of warriors, coordinated by horn signals and banners, spread out to flush out game and drive it ahead of them. Favored game includes the Mediterranean mastodon (nearly extinct outside Scythia and Draconea), wolves, bears, boars, elk, and goblins — the latter being considered animals by the Scythian nomads.

In both hunting and warfare, the Scythians are superbly talented horse-archers. They fire triple-edged arrows with deadly accuracy, and are expert riders and horse trainers. A Scythian rider learns early on to control his horse in complex maneuvers, using only the pressure of his legs against his mount's sides, so that the hands can be left free to handle a bow. Their leaders are crafty tacticians and very proficient in guerrilla and hit-and-run strategies. Perhaps the most important aspect of Scythian warfare is mobility, coupled with their complete mercilessness and ruthlessness.

At the conclusion of any victorious combat, dead foes are beheaded and skinned by those who have killed them. The top halves of enemy skulls are fashioned into drinking cups, while scalps are used as ornamental trophies. A warrior earns status by the number of scalps he can display on the bridle of his horse, or from his belt, cloak, or other clothes. These are considered marks of great distinction. The Scythians are also known to drink the blood of those they have slain (whether in battle or after a duel or minor fight), and cannibalism is also sometimes practiced.

Scythian religion is equally bloodthirsty, a fanatical shamanistic cult of the Old Gods, with Atta slightly more prominent than the others. They view killing and war as great and god-like actions, and thus rationalize the support of Atta (god of human greatness, and the physical link between the gods and men) as their patron deity. The Scythian shamans also dabble in necromantic rituals and magic as part of the cult.

Scythian burial customs show something of the influence of necromancy in their religion. Dead warriors are gutted and embalmed with aromatic substances, including galingale, parsley seeds, and anise, then sewn up and covered with wax. Spells are cast over the bodies as these steps are followed. The body is then placed in a reinforced yurt, which is covered over by a pile of corpses, including the warrior's horses, wives, slaves, and fallen enemies. (Horses, wives, and slaves may be mummified in the same manner as the warrior.) Personal possessions are buried in the yurt along with the warrior, and a burial mound (or kurgen) is raised over this grisly tomb.

As it is believed that the warrior's yurt must be completely covered over by other bodies, the relatives of the deceased may mount raids to obtain additional victims for this purpose. The slain who surround the yurt are supposed to act as immortal guardians to the tomb. Some claim that the shamans actually place necromantic curses over the kurgen to bring back the guardian bodies as zombies or skeleton warriors, and the mummified remains as Sahus, to protect the possessions (for they are often rich with gold treasures of many kinds) and the honor of the Scythian people forever after.

Scythian society is very simple. There are four classes, Warriors, Shamans, Artisans, and Slaves. Warriors are the most esteemed of all. The number of scalps and skull-cups in a warrior's possession is undeniable proof of status, with other possessions — especially wives, slaves, and gold — further confirming rank and position. The warriors with the most scalps are the most respected in the group, and the single warrior with the most trophies is the leader of any given band.

Shamans receive nearly as much respect as warriors, and serve as advisors to warrior chieftains. A few small Scythian bands, made up exclusively of shamans, are said to roam independently, spreading and maintaining necro-shamanistic magic and religion, mingling freely with the other bands, and dispensing advice, aide in battle, and other assistance as they see the need. Like warriors, they collect scalps, but the strength of their magic is the sole determinant of power and rank. A third class of Scythian society is made up of artisans. Most scholars believe that the Scythian artisans are largely made up of individuals of mixed Scythian and slave blood, devoted not to war but to the creation of various implements and tools. They are extremely skilled at metal-working, making beautiful ritual masks and ornaments of gold, and also superbly made shortbows of horn. No one is sure if the view of the artisans as a sort of superior slave caste is accurate, since few details of Scythian life are known. Certainly most of the tribesmen with foreign-seeming features in the Scythian tribe seem to be artisans, rather than warriors or shamans.

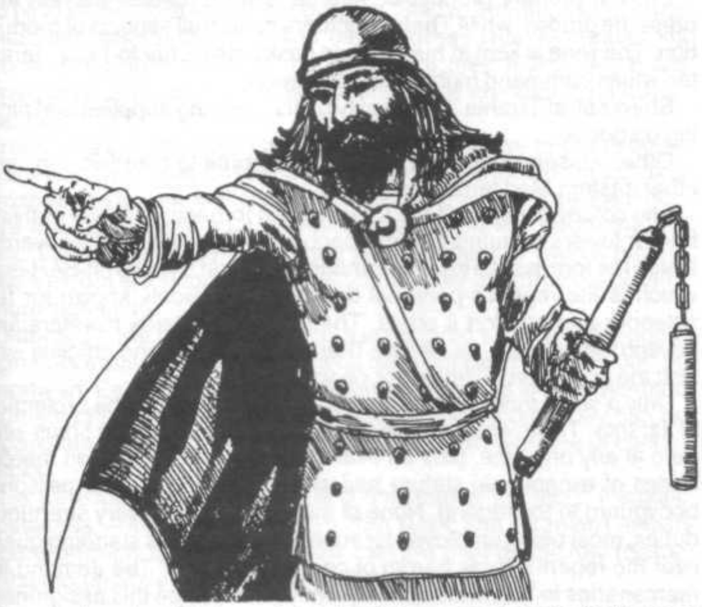
The slave class includes all Scythian females (warriors, shamans, and artisans are all males), plus any prisoners of war taken by the band. Females usually outnumber the prisoners; male captives are not commonly taken, except after a victory so devastating that there were more than enough casualties to satisfy the needs of all the rituals and ceremonies that follow a battle.

The Scythians have enormous capacities when it comes to celebrating. Among their less bloody entertainments, they enjoy strong wine, hashish, and opium. Lotus powder is also highly favored, but is obtained only on rare occasions, after raids; even then it is scarce. Amongst most Scythian tribes, the quantity of intoxicants which a warrior can handle is considered a measure of his manliness.

The horse-nomads of Scythia raid far and wide into adjoining lands. Zin, Yalak, Palasgea, and Vir have all trembled under the pounding hooves of Scythian war parties. The Scythians are bitter enemies of the Vanir of Hyperborea, who frequently raid their lands in search of plunder.

Much of Scythia is dotted by old ruins. Though the Scythian hordes have looted many of the old ruins, treasures are said to still be present in many of these ancient places. There is a very persistent old story concerning the region known as Eridan, which is said to be the site of an underground city abandoned by the Atlanteans for reasons unknown early in the First Age. This city, lost in all but legend since long before the Scythians came, is said to hold unimaginable treasures.

THARSHESH (tar-SHESH)



Located south of Galecea, Tharshesh is among the most advanced and sophisticated regions of Mediterranea. It borders Galecea and a narrow strip of Aragana to the north; west is the River Oceanus, and east, the Mediterranean Sea. The Straits of Tartessos between these two seas lie to the south.

Tharshesh was originally the site of a major Atlantean colony, now known as Tartessos, which was established in the great days of the First Age as a haven for the Mediterranean Sea trade and a port to provide access to the silver mines of the southern highlands. The colony dwindled after the Great Cataclysm, and the region was overrun by the barbaric Tharshi (tar-SHY), an olive-skinned, black-haired nomadic people from the interior of the region. These aggressive barbarians conquered the remnants of the Atlantean colony, absorbing the survivors and eventually coming to settle in the abandoned city. Reopening the silver mines, the Tharshi began to prosper, and soon began to build ships and reestablish some of the old Atlantean trade routes.

Tharshesh is not a large realm, but its coastline is a long one. Tartessos is the oldest city, and capitol of the realm. It is also the most crowded, decadent, corrupt, and best-known city in Tharshesh. The city of Cadaza (ka-DA-za) is the second largest of the Tharshi cities, only about half the size of Tartessos itself. The others are little more than towns: Garanada (ga-ra-NA-da), Sagura (sa-GUR-a), Ebro (A-bro), and Albaran (al-ba-RON). All these settlements are on the coast, and serve as important trading posts.

Outside the cities and towns, the population of Tharshesh lives in relative poverty. Most inhabitants are poor fishermen, goatherds, and so forth. It is common for the country people to seek their fortunes in the cities as mercenaries, guards, merchant crewmen, and the like.

Away from the coast, much of Tharshesh is wilderness. Forests teem with wild game including a rare species of Mediterranean ape Human barbarians live in these regions, uncivilized relatives of the Tharshi who never adopted city ways.

There are also goblins, nethermen, and even some andaman (beast-men) from Gondwana. Roads are poor where they exist at all, and travel is difficult and often fraught with danger.

As much as two-thirds of the population of Tharshesh is made up of people from other countries, most of them concentrated in the cities and towns. Tharsheshis often referred to as "the melting pot of nations," with a wide variety of peoples and cultures residing on a more-or-less permanent basis. Both Tartessos and Cadaza have ghetto areas where Shebans, Turanians, Kushites, Roms, Ophirites, Nubians, and many others live. The streets throng with a colorful mix of people, in costumes of all nationalities and speaking in a hundred diverse dialects and tongues.

Because Tharshesh has few laws and little concern for the legal workings of other lands, fugitives, outcasts, and undesirables of all sorts come here to escape persecution or imprisonment in their homelands. Crime is rampant in the streets; a proverb claims that the pickpockets and petty thieves of Tartessos can strip a man naked between the docks and the Palace if he does not take care.

Wealthy visitors often find it expedient to surround themselves and their possessions with guards. In Tartessos, it is possible to hire such services, as needed.

The diversity of Tharshesh also shows in its attitude towards religion. The Tharshi themselves have no hard and fast religious views (another proverb claims that their highest deity is the God of Currency). Foreigners living in Tharshesh are free to indulge in whatever worship they choose, and most religions and cults have some adherents in the cities and towns of the realm.

There is no real concept of distinct social classes in Tharshesh. The native Tharshi consider themselves superior to foreign-born residents, but money is the only real token of position. The person who has money can often do anything he or she desires with little fear of outside restraints. The government of Tharshesh is a reflection of this amoral society. It is totally corrupt, with money being a sure way to buy favor and influence. Minor government functionaries, even freedmen clerks, can retire with more money than many an Atlantean aristocrat from the bribes, kick-backs, and gratuities they collect. (For more details, see: *The City of Tartessos*) Aside from this "unofficial" corruption, the government itself receives kick-backs from officially sanctioned houses of ill repute, taverns, gambling dens, and almost anything else it can get a piece of. Some people claim the government gets more money from these sources than it brings in from the exorbitant tariffs charged for the use of Tharshi ports and trade facilities.

Tharshesh is headed by a mercantile governor, known as *The Prefect*, who is elected to his position every ten years by the great mercantile houses of the realm. He rules over the realm, supported by six Regents (one based in Cadaza, the others heading each of five overseas colonies). The Prefect himself governs Tartessos directly, while all the other towns and settlements of Tharshesh answer to the Regent in Cadaza. Each Regent (and the Prefect himself) is assisted by seven Vice-regents, who function as tax/tariff/duty collectors, and as judges. Each Vice-regent is in turn served by seven Vicegerants. All are reputedly corrupt, and can be "bought" for a price.

Tharshesh has a fair-sized army and a large and powerful navy, both of which are comprised almost entirely of mercenary troops from foreign countries. Both Tartessos and Cadaza have large military barracks, housing such diverse troop types as Scythian horse archers, Turanian light cavalry, Nubian war elephants, Kushite bowmen, and so forth. The navy is made up of equally varied elements, from Cymbrian and Ska corsairs to Shebans, Ophirians, Nubians, and many others.

The government (and many independent trading houses), hire on Free Companies of mercenaries or ship-captains (with their own ships and crews) on a regular basis. Though the pay is good (two to five times the standard rates for such work), corruption is rampant and morale is rarely very high.

Prospective mercenaries can hire on for one to four year hitches, or for a specific voyage or mission. Ships may be hired simply to escort a trading vessel to a given destination, or may be made a part of a standing naval squadron.

Tharshesh has a virtual monopoly on trade in the Mediterranean Sea, and has surpassed Atlantis as the number-one trading power in the region. Their ships range as far as Qaddan, Ophir and Marhashi, Ys, Avalon, and even Hyperborea. The wealth of Tharshesh is often used to purchase the allegiance of such hostile powers as the Gorgons and the Cymbri, who are paid to leave Tharshi shipping alone. Some people claim that Tharshesh pays these "allies" to actively harass the ships of their competitors, especially those of Sheba and

Atlantis; it is also believed that the warchests of the Gorgons are kept filled by Tharshi silver to keep the Hesperians from growing too strong. Although Tharshesh has long-standing trade pacts with many nations, it is debatable whether any such countries can truly be considered as allies.

Tharshesh maintains five major overseas colonies, outposts of trade in distant land. These include Taranta (Tar-AN-ta), Tarxian (TARK-se-an), Tartuk (TAR-tuk), Targrim (TAR-grim), and Tara (TAR-a). Each colony is answerable to Tharshesh, and supplies large quantities of goods to the capitol in the form of taxes.

THE COLONIES OF THARSHESH

Tharshesh has five overseas colonies, most of them maintained as focal points for trade and the exploitation of worthwhile resources. These outposts of the mercantile empire of Tharshesh, unlike the colonial lands of Hesperia, are generally established in uninhabited lands. Conquest and subjugation of foreigners is not the purpose of the Tharshi traders; they seek resources, not land.

Each colony consists of a large walled fortress-city, which houses the military force, the administrative personnel, and the laborers who extract the desired resource from the land nearby. Some have small Tharshi civilian populations, but for the most part people live in the colonies only if they can make money there, and hardly ever by choice.

The colonies are seldom fully self-sufficient. They are starkly utilitarian and rather grim, built for efficiency rather than aesthetic purposes. Supplies are shipped in by the vessels which call to pick up local resources. The colony ports also serve as stops for trading vessels.

TARA (TAR-a)

Tara is the only colony located outside the Mediterranean Sea. It is a grim fortress on the southwestern coast of Iber, established to exploit deposits of copper and iron ore found on the Iberian coast. A large work force of slaves mines these metals, which are shipped out every other month back to Tharshesh. Tara is also a stopover for merchant ships plying northern waters, but has little hope of replacing Ys as the major trade port of northern Mediterranea.

Tara is a dangerous place, and is the least esteemed of Tharshesh's colonies. The Picts who roam Iber's interior raid Tara frequently, and corsairs from Cymbri and Skye ply the sea lanes, making the colony sometimes seem like a city under siege.

Tara is one of the most heavily-fortified of the overseas colonies of Tharshesh. The walls of the fortress are massive, and a force of 100 men is kept constantly on duty (out of a total garrison of about 600 mercenary troops).

There is also a strong naval contingent of 6-10 ships stationed at Tara at all times. There are four outlying border towers to protect the lands around Tara — the fields that provide some of the city's food, and the mines themselves. Each of these forts holds a contingent of about 50 men from the city garrison. A low wall was built to connect the towers and keep out the Picts entirely, but it has been of only limited effectiveness. The Picts are a constant menace, though they are less active in winter than in summer.

Mercenary warriors and ship-captains are always in demand at Tara, as the turnover in manpower is understandably high. Wages offered are 5-10 times the standard rate of mercenary payment, due to the hazardous nature of duty here.

TARANTA (tar-AN-ta)

Located on the southeast of Saturnia, Taranta is one of the most pleasant colonies of Tharshesh. The climate is lovely, and the terrain around it a scenic combination of rolling hills, open meadows, and distant mountains. It is a popular post, coveted by Regents who want to settle down in luxury and comfort.

Taranta exports locally grown produce, such as grapes, olives, and various vegetables, plus grains such as millet and oats. A fair-sized slave workforce tends the fields, harvests the crops, and packages the produce in wooden crates.

But the primary product of Taranta is wine. Slaves harvest and press the grapes, while Tharshi vintners control all aspects of production. The wine is kept in huge oaken casks inside the fortress. Tarantan wines command high prices worldwide.

Ships call at Taranta on a weekly basis, carrying supplies and picking up goods.

Other vessels commonly stop here en route to Qaddan, Zin, and other eastern Mediterranean ports.

The colony consists of the usual walled fortress, with two outlying border towers to guard the approaches to the fields and vineyards. Inside the fortress is a luxurious mansion, called Sybaris (si-BAR-iss), which is the regent's personal dwelling. It is widely known for the splendor and comfort it offers. The regent entertains travelers and adventurers of note, as well as Tharshi merchants and officials who visit the colony on business (or on vacations).

Only a small military force is deemed necessary for the protection of Taranta. There are no more than 200 troops and three ships kept here at any one time, plus an elite force of about 50 Nubian mercenaries of exceptional stature and skill (who serve as the personal bodyguard to the regent). None of these troops have very strenuous duties, most being employed for such simple tasks as standing guard over the regent's large harem of courtesan-slaves. The demand for mercenaries in Taranta is consequently small, since this assignment is much sought after.

The nymphs and other inhabitants of Saturnia resent the presence of the colony at Taranta, but have taken no active measures against it. However, no Tarantan is wise to stray out of the fields and into the unsettled woods or groves, where vengeful denizens of the wilderness have been known to play cruel tricks on unwelcome intruders.

TARGRIM (tar-GRIM)

Like Tara, Targrim is a dangerous place in which to serve. It is located on the Mediterranean coast of Draconea, which is home to many dreadful beasts. Though incidents are rare, Targrim has been attacked more than once by rogue dragons. The worst attack in recent memory was the vengeful descent of a mated pair of great dragons on the fortress, following the slaying of one of their offspring. Though both dragons were ultimately killed, they exacted a terrible toll first.

Targrim's primary resource is tin, mined by the largest slave force in the colonies. In addition, there is some interest in expanding Tharshi dominion beyond Targrim and along the Draconean and Araganan coasts to link up with Tharshesh proper, so that a whole string of havens might be built to aid the passage of trade through the western Mediterranean.

The mines at Targrim yield a great deal of tin, which is shipped out on a monthly basis back to Tharshesh. The dangers inherent in the operation of the mines are great; cave-ins are a periodic problem, as are encounters with wyrrms (larval dragons) and other subterranean monsters. High casualty rates among the slaves have lead to a great demand for extra workers, and Targrim's regent will purchase slaves from anyone with no questions asked. It is not unusual for unscrupulous shipowners to sell passengers into slavery at Targrim to turn an extra profit.

Targrim has a strong mercenary army, numbering about 500 troops, and a naval force of five ships. Four guard towers, erected at intervals of one mile, surround the edge of the Draconean wilderness. Mercenaries are always much in demand, and the pay, at five times standard rates, is good. Even more than troops, Targrim is always interested in hiring adventurers willing to explore the Draconean wilderness to discover possible sites for expansion or exploitation.

TARTUK (tar-TOOK)

Tartuk is located on the isle of Atuk in the Mediterranean Sea. The primary resources of the island are its agate mines, from which large numbers of stones of exceptional quality are taken, with cork, hides and olive oil being of lesser importance. Slaves are employed in the mines, and also in the cork and olive groves. Tharshi hunters kill aurochs (wild bulls native to the region) for their hides, which are tanned prior to shipment. Ships visit the island irregularly, on no set schedule.

Mercenaries are very much in demand, receiving five to seven times the standard pay rates for service here. The walled fortress of Tartuk is garrisoned by a large military force of up to 500 troops. There are also more than two dozen guard towers radiating outward from the fortress. These are lightly garrisoned (a contingent of twelve men is standard), but are located in sight of one another for purposes of semaphore signalling.

Ostensibly, the large military force is required to protect the agate shipments from raids by corsairs who have not been "bought off" by Tharshesh. Each of the mines is heavily guarded, as are the overland shipments to the fortress where agates are stored until they can be shipped out. The signal towers serve to give early warning of corsair attacks.

It is believed, however, that this is only part of the story. Narcotic substances — lotus powder, opium from Yalak, and Turanian hashish all pass through Tartuk. Some think that this may be the real reason for the inordinately tight security at Tartuk.

TARXIAN (TARK-zee-an)

Tarxian is the most enigmatic of the colonies of Tharshesh. Located on a small island in the center of the Mediterranean Sea, the colony has nothing to do with the exploitation of resources — there is nothing on this island to exploit. Tarxian is a military base, and is off limits to all outsiders. Even ordinary trading vessels from Tharshesh are forbidden to stop here. All supplies for the garrison arrive at a single fortress-port, and no one from the supply ships is permitted to go ashore on pain of death.

It is known that at least a thousand elite mercenary troopsare maintained here, along with a dozen or more large warships. Some claim that there are actually several thousand troops on the island, housed in hidden cave/barracks in the hills along the coasts. Others think additional ships may be concealed in sheltered coves and lagoons. Certainly there are extensive facilities for building and repairing ships. A work force of undetermined size is quartered on the island, and a slave labor force may be present as well.

Whatever the true nature of the island may be, there is absolutely no demand for mercenaries at Tarxian. Only elite warriors may apply for this duty, which is said to pay extremely well; it is believed that duty on Tarxian, once undertaken, is for life, due to the obsessive concern for security.

The strategic location and unknown purpose of Tarxian make it a place that attracts considerable attention from the various rivals of Tharshesh. Ys, Atlantis, Hesperia, and even Qaddan are all known to be very interested in learning the island colony's secrets.

THE OUTPOSTS OF THARSHESH

Besides the colonies, Tharshi interests control several parcels of land that are used strictly as trading posts. These outposts are almost completely dependent on Tharshi trade ships for all supplies.

The outposts trade with the people native to the land, usually obtaining items such as opium, hashish, lotus, salt, rare herbs, oils, uncut gemstones, raw ores, slaves, and animal hides. The Tharshi pay silver for such goods, and seldom ask questions.

The major outposts are listed in descending order below. Others pop up and disappear again all over the Mediterranean coasts. Most are constructed in the fashion of small forts, usually of wood and/or loose stone.

The major outposts are:

Tarsharon (tar-SHAR-on);	outside of Joppa in Zin.
Tarmel (tar-MEL);	on the west coast of Melos Isle.
Tarrak (TAR-ak);	on the coast south of Huyuk in Yalak.
Tarrus (TAR-us);	on the south coast of Ogyrus Isle.
Tarroy (tar-OY);	on the coast of Yalak north of Lesbos.
Tarbadar (TAR-ba-dor);	on the north central coast of Dabba.

Certain types of merchandise and services, rare or even illegal in many other lands, are eminently available in Tartessos. These include:

ITEM/SERVICE	**COST**
Garotte	1 C.P.
Black jack	5 C.P.
Walking stick (w/hidden dagger)	5 G.P.
Love philtre (per dose)	100 G.P.
Slow poison (per full dose)	300 G.P.
Tatoo (per sq. in.)	1 + S.P.
Thieves' tools	10 G.P.
Bill collection (by force)	50 + G.P.
Murder (semi-professional)	500 + G.P.
Mugging (per mugger)	100 + G.P.
Assassination (professional)	2000 + G.P.
Forgery (per page)	50 G.P.
Opium (per pipeful)	20 G.P.
Hashish (per dram)	10 G.P.
Black lotus (per dram)	150 G.P.
Bodyguard (professional; per week)	200 + G.P.
Thug (protection; per week)	100 + G.P.
Fomor (Fomorian liquor; per pint)	10 G.P.
Yage (hallucinogen; per dram)	50 G.P.
Concubine	100 + G.P.
Slave (human)	50 + G.P.
Slave (Puntian dwarf)	75 + G.P.
Slave (goblin)	20 + G.P.
Slave (Netherman)	75 + G.P.
Slave (Andaman)	200 + G.P.
Wild animal (various types)	100 + G.P.
Snake venom (per dose)	200 G.P.
Darnell (sleeping powder; per dose)	100 G.P.
Gladiator (trained; slave)	500 + G.P.

VIR (veer)

The forested river country of Vir borders on many realms of Mediterranea. Scythia's rolling plains lie to the east, with the Black Forest to the north and Draconea to the east. Palasgea and Otesium touch Vir's southern borders, as does an arm of the Mediterranean Sea near the Symplegades. Vir is dominated by the river valley of the Vardar and its tributaries, which empties into the Euxine Sea near the Scythian border.

Vir is a nation of warlike barbarian peoples, light-skinned, dark-haired, and almost always tall and strong in build. They dress in crude fur cloaks, loincloths, and boots. Their warriors wear wolf-skin caps, made from the head and skull of the animal. These partially cover the faces of the warriors, giving them a fierce and fearsome appearance.

The Vir are static hunter-gatherers, living in permanent riverside villages. They have some highly limited knowledge of agriculture, but are mostly hunters and warriors. Each settlement and tribe is an independent entity, though there is some trade between them (fighting, however, is much more common).

River fishing and the hunting of auroch, deer, and small animals and birds supply the bulk of the food supply. Edible fruits, seeds, and roots are gathered to balance the diet. The people of Vir have become adept at transplanting and propagating food plants from the wilderness to plots around their settlements. This primitive form of agriculture serves to suffice, as the Vir have no concept of seed-farming and must gather their plants fresh from the wild at the start of each growing season.

Vir is a somewhat isolated area, and the tribes are rarely in contact with other regions. They are still a stone-age culture, with no knowledge of how to work metals. Some of the tribes, however, are known to trade with Tharshesh and Ku. Furs of various types are traded by way of Oggia, in order to obtain amber from Ku. Amber and furs are traded in turn to Tharshesh in exchange for metal weapons and utensils, clothing, copper jewelry, and similar items.

The tribes of Vir share a common religion, though there is some variation from one group to another. They are animists whose shamans worship animal gods represented by the wolf (warrior/hunter), the stag (chief/procreator), and the fish (bringer of water). The focal deity of the cult is *Tama*, one of the Old Gods. This Earth Goddess is worshipped as the provider of food and shelter and the sustainer of all life.

The social system of Vir is quite straightforward; he who is the strongest and the smartest rules. The leader obtains his position by besting the previous leader in combat, through the ritual of a challenge and duel. The people are hunters and warriors, with most magic concentrated in the hands of the shamans. There are no wizards, though a few witches and warlocks are occasionally found.

Tribesmen make use of spears, slings, clubs, maces, daggers, and staves in battle and on the hunt. Wolf-like dogs are used to great advantage to track, corner, and kill prey.

The whole of Vir is surrounded by forests and mountains. Within the region, the humans share their lands with a wide variety of creatures and beasts of all descriptions, both good and evil. Bands of goblins, ogres, and trolls roam the woods, as do nymphs, pixies, sprites, and satyrs. The superstitious tribesmen of Vir avoid such beings when they can, but will always fight when necessary.

YS (YISS)

Ys is a small island kingdom which lies in the Straits of Ys between Alba and the Mediterranean coast. The straits connect the River Oceanus with the Hyperborean Sea to the east. The island is a fairly large one, but is primarily noted for the magical, white-towered city of Ys, which lies on a rocky offshore spire in the midst of a great bay.

The city is triangular in shape, with the three walls protecting the city from the tides and gales which lash the straits. The walls actually extend out into the water, with great flood gates which can be closed to shelter the harbors of Ys from storm or corsair attack. The island and the city are home to the High Elves of Ys, an elegant and stately people of great dignity, courage, and wisdom. Non-elves, who are treated with considerable wariness and caution, refer to the elves of Ys as arrogant and haughty, but in fact they are simply uninterested in events concerning the outside world.

The power, wealth, and prestige of Ys are built on the city's reputation as a trading emporium and haven, but unlike such famous trading states as Sheba and Tharshesh, Ys has few trading vessels of its own. The Elves of Ys invest little of their own effort in trade, but draw the merchants of other lands by virtue of their position, their magnificent harbor, and their willingness to support trade and travel in their part of the world. The shipyards of Ys also draw much outside attention, for though they are not great voyagers themselves, the people of Ys have become a major supplier of first-rate craft to others. Ys enjoys close ties with Tharshesh, Broceliande, Ku, Avalon, and Havar. Wealth from these and other, more distant lands, flows into the elven-realm to fill the coffers of the kingdom and enrich the citizenry.

The kingdom does maintain a small but efficient navy, used to patrol the straits and secure the trade routes against the harassment of corsairs — Cymbrians, Ska, and independent freebooters alike. These ships are fairly small in size, sleek, and very fast. The squadron is supported by Hesperian craft, as well.

Ys has very selective laws concerning immigration and permanent residence on the island or in the city. Only elves may reside here on a permanent basis. Entry into the city is generally restricted to residents of the island and the crews of the trade ships or Hesperian naval vessels. Special dispensation may be given to scholars, diplomats, renowned heroes, royal guests, and others with a very good reason to seek admission, but control over such dispensation is tight and carefully supervised.

The city of Ys is the only major settlement in the realm. The island is dotted by military fortresses which guard the coasts from possible hostile incursions; the interior is parklike, with a few farming areas and numerous reserves for hunting or the contemplation of the natural beauty of the world. Though Ys is a populous city, overcrowding is not a problem, and the peace of the island remains undisturbed. The city itself is at once massive and elegant, impressive yet subtly beautiful. It is a city of extremes, with functional efficiency blending with artistry and grace to create a masterpiece of architectural magnificence unique in all Mediterranea — or, some claim, in the world. The style of the buildings is based on High Elven tastes, but tempered by influences from Atlantis and elsewhere. Roofs are often plated with metals, while rich wood panels (often imported from as far away as the Cedar Forests of Zin) line the interior walls. Marble is the primary building medium.

Aside from building materials, Ys imports luxuries of all kinds, plus the finest in weapons and equipment for the military. The army is not very large, but it is extraordinarily well-equipped. Local troops in the island garrisons or on the naval ships (but never the city garrison itself) are often supported by elven mercenary warriors. Mercenary pay and rewards for good service are rich, but penalties exacted for misconduct are severe (Ys seeks protectors, not brigands).

Locals and mercenaries alike use the finest equipment available. Atlantean steel is the norm for all weapons and armor. The gladius (short sword) is the standard weapon; most troops wear partial armor, but the Royal Guard is equipped with full plate armor of top-quality Atlantean steel. On the walls of the city, giant catapults are mounted to hold enemy ships at bay.

Ys is a monarchy, ruled over by a King and Queen with co-equal powers. The trade guilds of the city, however, also wield a great deal of influence, serving as advisors to the Crown and acting to carry out the decisions of the monarchs. There are a wide variety of guilds in Ys, each headed by a Guildmaster who speaks for his membership. The Guildmaster presents the complaints and suggestions of his or her guild to the Royal Family, and is responsible for holding the loyalty of the membership to the Crown. The King and Queen seek the advice of the guilds on subjects that fall within their competence, and act upon that advice with wisdom and forethought. The people of Ys are treated very well, and support for the guilds and the Crown is strong. The upper classes generally are devoted to the pursuit of leisure or personal hobbies, with the magical sciences being particularly favored. There are many wizards among the elven aristocrats of Ys, and several small institutes have been established in the city, open to elves interested in the arcane arts, encompassing almost every major magic field.

The religion of Ys is rather incoherent, with many foreign or new cults gaining and losing popularity as current fads change. The laws of Ys currently recognize the worship of 121 different deities, drawn from many scattered sources. Most deities who gain or retain large followings are those associated with luck, power, wealth, magic, and fertility. Understandably, religious tolerance and flexibility is the rule rather than the exception in Ys.

SEA OF BAKU (ba-KU)

The Sea of Baku connects with the Erythraen Sea through the straits between Turan and Jambu. Turan and Scythia lie to the west, Jambu to the east, while an arc formed by Hyperborea and Zemlazelan separates the northern stretch of the Sea of Baku from the icy North Sea. From the isle of Bathsheba to uninhabited Zemlazelan, it is a shallow sea, especially near the coasts.

The tides can create or inundate hundreds of tiny islands. (None lie more than a few feet above or below the water at any given time.) The constant flux between salt water and open air makes them inhospitable to marine life and surface life alike, leaving the islands barren and rocky.

There are permanent islands dotting the Sea of Baku as well. The larger, more accessible ones are generally dominated by Sheba; those which are too hard to reach, or too small to be of use, are usually uninhabited. A few are occupied by exiles, outcasts, hermits, and similar people. These isles are known collectively as the Isles of Zora (ZOR-a; "The Dawn").

Even more dangerous to seafarers than the shallow water is a terrifying natural phenomenon which gives the Sea of Baku its more colorful name: *The Sea of Fire*. The central region of the Sea is a constantly billowing mass of flame and choking smoke. Oil and natural gas springs on the shallow seafloor spew their flammable liquids unceasingly to the surface. How the fire started no one knows, though certain religions make reference to this phenomenon. No one can guess how long the Fires will last, but some claim that their end will herald a world-wide cataclysm.

Besides providing inspiration for storytellers, the Fires of Baku effectively deter travel between north and south across the sea. The Shebans, those ubiquitous seafarers, skirt the southern sea but hardly ever venture past the Fires into the northern waters. Only Hyperborean amber serves as a lure strong enough to encourage a Sheban merchant to brave the dangers of such a voyage, and all but the most courageous avoid the journey, even so. Even if the Fires are passed successfully, the hostility of the Hyperboreans and the perils of the return trip are generally felt to be risks that outweigh the potential profits. Some sailors claim that the Fires can be skirted by hugging the coasts, through the Strait of Wolves (on the Neurian coast of Scythia) or the Samara (sa-MAR-a) Straits on the Molodo coastline. These straits are dangerously shallow; a large ship can cross only at high tide, and still runs a considerable risk of disaster.

The Straits of Samara lead into the Bay of Samara. The waters of this bay, which lies between the Fires of Baku and the Argan peninsula on the coast of Jambu, are warmed by a favorable current out of the Fires. The shallow waters support a mass of vegetation reminiscent of the Sargasso Sea, but rooted to the bottom. It is said that these waters are the feeding grounds of such monstrous creatures as kraken, leviathans, sea dragons, and plesiosaurs.

The Gulf of Zahran (ZAH-ran) is also rather shallow, but the Shebans have mapped safe passages through these waters. Ships without Sheban pilots are likely to be in as much danger as in the passages around the Fires. The gulf is dotted with small islands, most of them claimed as estate lands by Sheban nobles.

Between Hyperborean Cimmeria and Eridan in Scythia is a deep sea basin, the Eridan Straits. Also located in the straits is the *Well of Awatan* (a-wa-TAN), which causes strange tides and currents during storms or under the full moon. Local legends tell of sea monsters and sea devils living deep within the Well, but these are probably much exaggerated. Sightings of such creatures are few and far between, though some sailors with a flair for mystery claim that this is because those who face the true horror of the Well of Awatan do not escape to tell the tale.

THE SEA PEOPLES

The Sea Peoples are a loose confederation of sea-faring nomadic tribes whose ships roam the waterways and coastal regions around Mediterranea and northern Gondwana. Their origins are, at best, inexact: some claim descent from the Atlantean colonists of the fabled First Age, while others profess to be the last survivors of an ancient civilization destroyed in the Great Cataclysm (see: **HISTORY OF THE ATLANTEAN WORLD**). While Second Age scholars have tended to dismiss such claims, it is true that the Sea Peoples appear to be of mixed blood. Like the First Atlanteans, most of these folk are tall and dark skinned.

Unlike the Atlanteans, however, the Sea Peoples exhibit a wide range of hair colors and textures.

The Sea Peoples have long sought a permanent homeland to settle in, and have long been denied this simple desire. The Tharshi have forbade them access to their territories as have the Hesperians and the Atlanteans. The Ska of Alba and the Vanir of Hyberborea often attack their ships on sight, primarily to make off with their womenfolk, who are deemed to be most attractive. Only the Corsairs of Cymbri have ever offered aid to the Sea Peoples, and this only in exchange for their allegiance (the Sea Peoples have thus far declined to accept this offer).

Because they have no true homeland, the Sea Peoples will sometimes hire out as mercenary soldiers or seamen. Their warriors are well-regarded, and skilled in the use of the short bow, javelin, or spear. Most wear leather armor. Though the Sea Peoples have many ships (mostly small to medium-sized sailing craft), they will not use their own vessels for mercenary purposes.

Sea People tribes of 50 to 300 individuals (with 1 to 6 vessels) may be encountered anywhere in the Mediterranean region. As many as fifty different tribes are believed to exist, though it is rare for more than a dozen such groups to congregate together at one time except in times of trouble or need.

ISLES OF MEDITERRANEA

The many islands and islets surrounding the Mediterranean continent can be divided into four primary groups: those of the Mediterranean Sea; of the Straits of Ys; of the Eridan Straits; and those along the coast of Scythia.

Of the islands within the Mediterranean Sea, Atuk and Tarxian are described in detail under *COLONIES OF THARSHESH*. The others are mainly small islands and islets, most of which have no human inhabitants. Many of these are used by Mediterranean Corsairs and Sea Peoples for supply stops and safe havens. There is no shortage of these islets, as they dot the entire span of the Mediterranean and also extend into the Euxine Sea.

Of the inhabited isles, the most notable are Ogyrus (O-gee-rus), Ogylus (O-gee-lus), Delphos (DEL-fos), Tenedos (TEN-e-dos), Ogleostra (OG-lee-O-stra), Melos (ME-los), and Achamantis (ak-a-MAN-tis).

Ogleostra is the largest of Mediterranean isles and is highly coveted by Tharshesh for its strategic position, good harbours, and rich supply of agates. However, the native Sardana tribes have successfully repelled Tharshi colonists for many years. Countless dry-stone nuraghi (tower-like fortresses) cover the island allowing the entire population to gain immediate and defendable shelter from raiders. Smoke and fire signals allow communication among every nuragh, thus allowing the Sardana (the natives) even further defensive benefits.

Ogyrus is a frequent black market stop for those going to and from Acheron. It is located about a single day's sailing due north of Acheron. A Tharshi outpost (Tarrus) is located here, which draws many free traders, adventurers, thieves, and scoundrels.

Ogylus lies about a half day's sail southeast of Peloponnesus in Palasgia. It is notable for its First Age ruins which are now occupied by a short, dark-skinned people much akin to the blood thirsty Scythians. They have no horses, but their bloodlust is just as great as their barbarian cousins.

Melos supports a small but thriving Tharshi trade outpost (Tarmel). It is the center of obsidian trade in this region. Melos is located halfway between Ogylus and the Straits of the Symplegades.

Achamantis is another Tharshi trade outpost built around a rich copper mine worked by slaves. The outpost itself has become large enough to warrant its own name; Alashiya (a-la-SHY-ya).

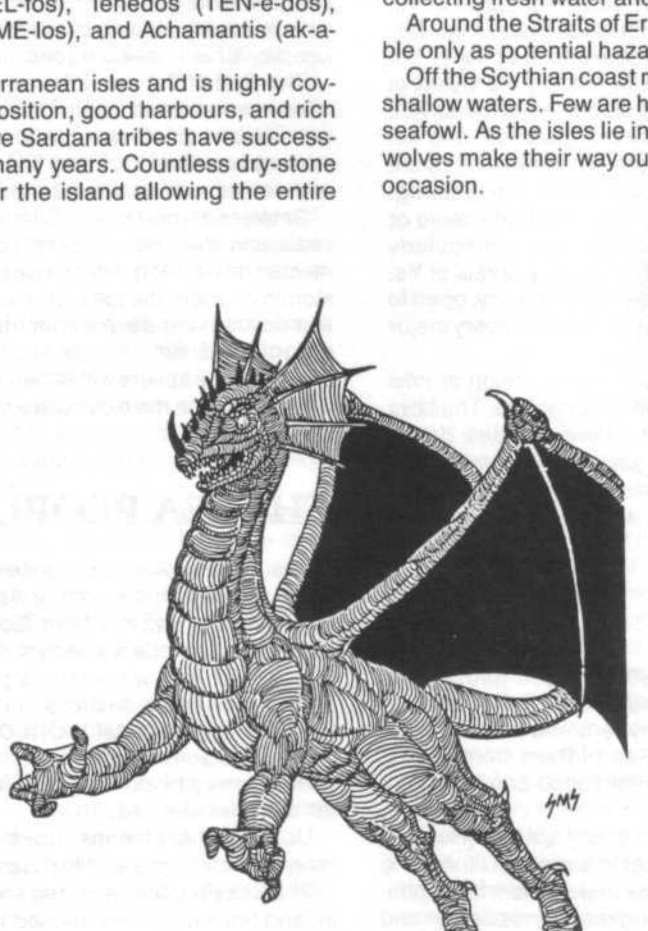
Delphos and Tenedos are sister-islands just offshore of central Palasgia. Upon these isles dwell a tribe of centaurs reputed to be skilled painters, musicians, and artisans. Not much is known of them, for they favor privacy.

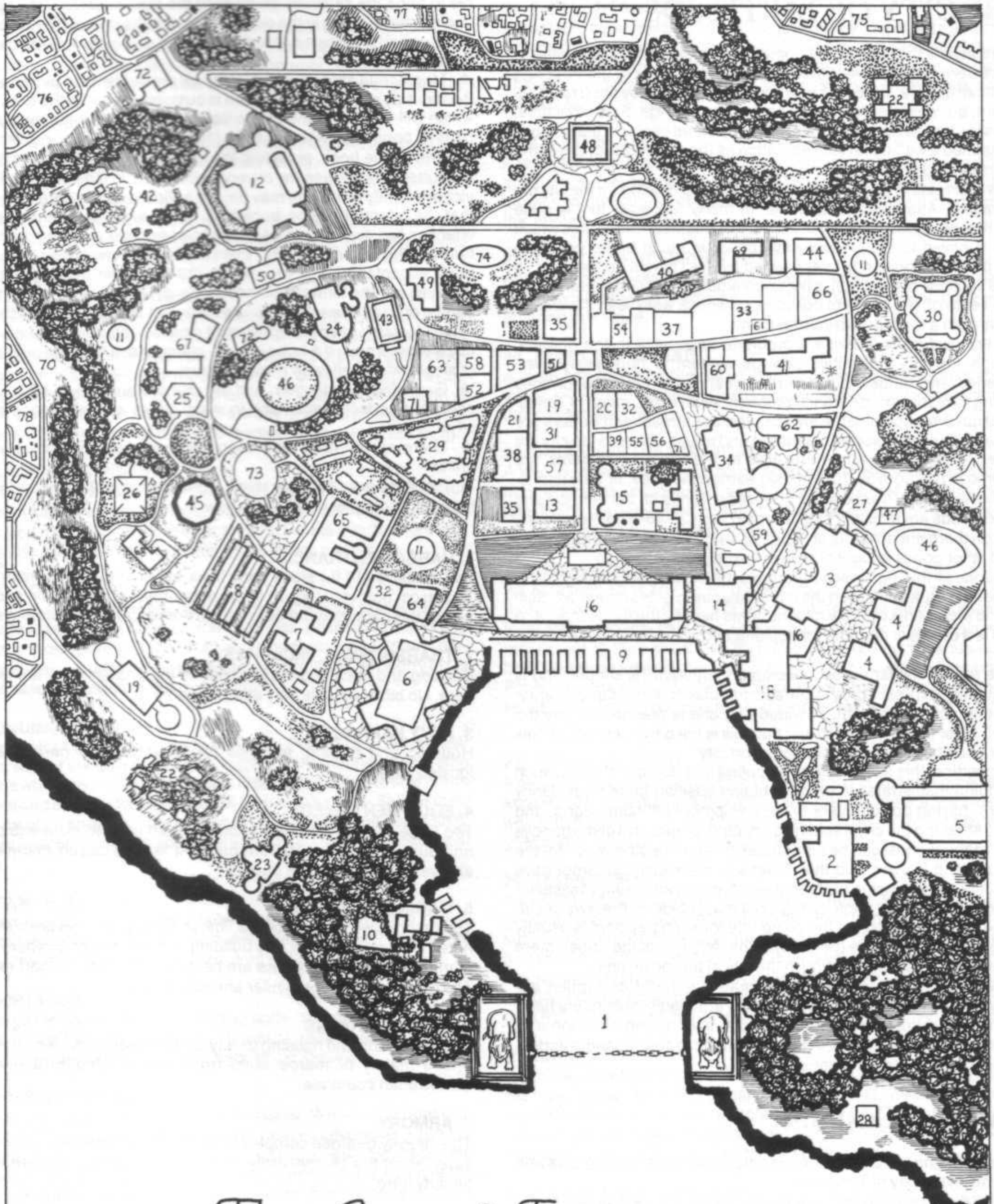
Other islands bear such names as: Delos, Samos, Lebynthos, Dia, Aeaea, Aegina, Strophades, Chios, Aeolus, Scheria, and Eryx. These and numerous others are either uninhabited or home to such beings as Cyclopses, Aegir (swamp giants), and so forth.

The islands within the Straits of Ys are of little importance, though certain of these rocky islets serve as minor stopovers for trade ships collecting fresh water and fruits.

Around the Straits of Eridan are several low-lying muddy isles notable only as potential hazards to unwary seamen.

Off the Scythian coast many grassy hill-islets gently roll up from the shallow waters. Few are home to any creatures save flocks of nesting seafowl. As the isles lie in very shallow waters just offshore, packs of wolves make their way out to wreak havoc among the avian flocks on occasion.

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The City of Tartessos

THE CITY OF TARTESSOS

Tartessos is the capitol of Tharshesh, and one of the largest cities in the western hemisphere. Once an important colony of the First Age Atlantean empire, Tartessos was partially destroyed by the Great Cataclysm, but was later rebuilt during the Second Age. Since that time, Tartessos has gained eminence as an important center of trade. It has also gained a well-deserved reputation as the most corrupt city in the civilized world.

It is often said of Tartessos that the only thing holding up the city are its ancient, Atlantean foundations. In many respects, this is quite true; though aged and weathered, the few Atlantean structures which have survived to the present day appear in much better condition than the flimsy buildings later erected by the Tharshi themselves. In some sections of the city, it is not uncommon to find structures whose roofs seem on the verge of collapse, or whose walls lean inwards or outwards in a most precarious fashion.

Overcrowding is likewise a problem, especially in the ghettos. Though the city's primitive sewage system is hopelessly overburdened and outdated, the corrupt mercantile government does nothing to rectify this perennial problem. As a result, much of Tartessos exudes an abominable stench, and the streets and gutters are choked with piles of accumulated filth and refuse. Taxes in the city are higher than almost anywhere else in the world. Residents are required to pay from 50-70% of their earned incomes, or face imprisonment in the city's antiquated dungeons. Tariffs on both import and export goods are similarly high, ranging from 20-40% on most items. Though there are no tariffs on liquor of any sort, a 20% tax is payable on all other goods bought or sold in the city proper.

Despite all this, Tartessos is perhaps the most active trading port in the world, surpassing even the city of Atlantis in gross revenues. Sailors and merchants of many nations come here by the thousands, and there is a constant demand for housing and short-term accommodations.

The reason for Tartessos' uncommon popularity is simple, and is adequately expressed by a phrase popular to the local citizenry: "Anything can be bought, provided that one is prepared to pay the price." Most would hasten to add that this is the only "law" which has never been broken in this infamous port city.

In practice, this single axiom is applied in a number of ways, such as bribing magistrates in order to obtain falsified foreign residency papers, paying dockmasters to pass shipments of contraband, and so on. Although the city's sentinels are paid to keep civil disturbances to a minimum, most can be persuaded to "look the other way" for the right price. It is even said that Tartessos' mercantile governor pays certain corsair captains to steer clear of his private trading vessels.

Those who cannot afford to pay graft must abide by the laws or suffer the consequences. As the going rate for such payment is usually 100 gold pieces or more (per level of the recipient of the bribe), there are few poor thieves operating in the city at any given time.

The results of Tartessos' widespread system of corruption are many-fold. Illegal substances of all sorts are readily obtainable here, as are forged documents, rare artifacts, slaves, and all manner of stolen goods. It is believed, in fact, that traffic in contraband is Tartessos' leading source of revenue.

Laws and Customs

The following is a brief listing of some of the more notable laws and customs of the city of Tartessos:

- Civil disturbances (fights, loud arguments, etc.) will usually result in the appearance of 2-12 sentinels, who will arrive on the scene within 2-20 minutes (unless the local contingent has been paid to ignore such a situation prior to its occurrence). Tharshi sentinels wear studded leather armor, carry flails, and are known for their quick tempers. Captured offenders will be manacled and taken to the nearest guard post, where they can expect to spend the next 1-6 days, depending on the seriousness of the crime. It may, however, be possible to bribe the sentinels en route to the guardhouse, and so obtain one's release. Once in the guardhouse, a bribe may still be employed to effect early release, but at this point an overnight lock-up can seldom be avoided.
- Murder and assault with intent to kill are punishable by hanging. A 2-8 day stay in the city's dungeon is customary prior to the execution, which will be held in the public square (for the entertainment of the general populace). A heavy bribe (10 times the usual going rate) may get one off the hook, providing the individual who has been killed or assaulted was not wealthy or very well-known; in the former case, the victim's family or friends may pay off a Vicegerant in order to ensure that the offender will be punished. In the latter case, the best the offender can expect is to be imprisoned for 1-20 years, or until such time as "the heat dies down." Even this is dependent upon the consulate's acceptance of a very heavy (20 times the usual going rate) bribe, as per the former instance. If the victim was an important mercantile official, even this recourse may not be open to the offender. "Trial" for such offenses consists of a private meeting with one of the city's vicegerants; if a bribe is to be attempted, it must be made here (a single offer is allowed in most cases).
- Gambling, prostitution, and the use of narcotics or other intoxicants are perfectly legal, and in many cases are sanctioned by the city.
- There are no laws restricting the individual's religious preferences.
- Ghettoes are allowed to retain ethnic customs and laws as long as they do not conflict with Tharshi law.

1. HARBOR ENTRANCE

Two massive (40 ft.) stone lions flank either side of the entrance to Tartessos' port facilities. In times of trouble, a heavy chain is drawn across this causeway, helping secure the harbor from intruding ships.

2. THARSHI NAVAL FACILITIES

Docking and maintenance facilities for the Tharshi navy are located here. No other vessels may enter this area.

3. NAVY BARRACKS

Housing and training facilities for Tharshi naval personnel are located here.

4. EQUIPMENT SHEDS

Two large and run-down warehouses, both used to store equipment and supplies for the Tharshi navy. At least a dozen marines are always stationed here as guards.

5. MARINE BARRACKS

The marines who serve aboard Tharshi's naval vessels are stationed here. The lower level of this building serves as a brig, where navy, marine, and army prisoners are held pending trial or court martial. The brig facilities in particular are quite crude.

6. ARMY BARRACKS

A large training and housing facility for Tartessos' army, which is comprised mainly of mercenaries from various Mediterranean and Gondwanan countries.

7. ARMORY

This heavily guarded complex is used to store weapons, armor, and supplies for the Tharshi army. At least two dozen guards are always on duty here.

8. STABLES

Horses, chariots, and wagons used by the Tharshi army are kept here. Maintenance of all transport vehicles is handled on the premises.

9. PORT FACILITIES

All vessels visiting Tartessos must dock here.

10. WAREHOUSES

These ancient and decrepit facilities are seldom used anymore, the more modern bonding warehouses (Nos. 4 and 6) being preferred in most cases. It is widely believed that shipments of contraband are secretly stored here pending sale or transfer by corrupt city officials.

11. WATCHTOWERS

These 30 ft. structures normally house 12 sentinels and a sergeant at arms. Holding cells are found in the lower levels.

12. THE PALACE

A refurbished First Age structure, now home to Tharshi's Regent. The palace is heavily guarded (over 200 elite guards), and only official guests may enter.

13. THE LIBRARY AT TARTESSOS

Once a superior facility, now poorly maintained, the library is of little use. Most of the valuable magical and alchemical texts formerly kept here have been stolen or lost. The small staff of scribes and scholars employed here are generally too apathetic to be much help to those seeking information. Accordingly, chances of locating information of any sort are limited to 1-3% per each full day of research spent on the premises (1% chance with regard to magical/alchemical research).

14. BONDING/LICENSES

This is essentially a large warehouse with a small office complex for the harbormaster and his scribes. Import/export licenses are issued here at a cost of 500 gold pieces per annum. Goods may be stored on the premises for a fee of 5% of their gross value, per month.

15. HALL OF RECORDS

This run-down office complex is occupied by the city's taxmaster and a staff of several dozen assessors and scribes. All tax and real estate records are kept here, but the facility is so badly managed that it normally requires 1-6 days to locate any such information. Property tax is 10% of assessed value of the real estate.

16. BONDING HOUSE

This is another warehouse/office complex. The city's bondsmaster and his staff of six dozen sentinels inspect all incoming goods; ship captains who arrive in Tartessos must report here within twelve hours of arrival and arrange for inspection of their ship's cargo. Failure to do so will result in arrest and the confiscation of all goods on board ship. An additional 5% tariff is levied on all imports of a magical/alchemical nature.

17. SEAMAN'S GUILD

Seamen looking for work generally gather here during the day in numbers ranging from 5-100 individuals. The guildmaster knows who most of them are, and must be consulted prior to any hirings.

18. SHIPYARDS

This large facility handles repairs of all sorts, and occasionally sells, leases, and buys old ships. A large crew of carpenters and laborers is employed by the yardmaster, who handles all inquiries.

19. THE SEAHAWK INN

A seedy establishment frequented by sailors of many nationalities. The food, drink, and service are of poor quality. Low prices keep the place packed at night, however, and gossip concerning trade and navigation is often readily obtained for the price of a few drinks. As fights are quite a common occurrence here, merchants and more respectable folk tend to avoid this place.

20. BAWDY HOUSE

A shabby, two-story establishment frequented primarily by drunken sailors. A half-dozen strong and surly Nubian warriors provide security for the madame (an aging but well-liked courtesan) and her ladies. Costs range from 1-10 gold pieces.

21. THE PORT TAVERN

A tolerably clean establishment frequented by merchants and traders. Prices and quality are average. Musicians and dancing girls provide entertainment on most nights, and the proprietor (a native Tharshi noted for his capacity for strong drink) is always looking for inexpensive, new talent.

22. CITY DONJUN

A fearsome old relic of the First Age, complete with torture chambers and dark, subterranean lower levels. The facilities are said to be both crude and unsanitary. At least fifty sentinels are always on guard in this immense structure.

23. TEMPLE OF HESPERUS

Amazon priestesses and acolytes operate this temple, which has a small, local following. Males are prohibited from worshipping or even entering this place.

24. TEMPLE OF ISHTAR

A large and beautiful temple run by a Sheban high priestess and a dozen or so male acolytes. Costly gold vessels and other ceremonial devices are kept here.

25. SHRINE OF THE IMMORTALS

A Khitan-style structure run by an aged mystic and seven monks (all from Khitai). Practitioners of eastern mysticism come here to meditate during the early morning hours. Valuable scrolls and artifacts are said to be housed within this simple and austere structure.

26. TEMPLE OF POSEIDON

An Atlantean First Age structure restored to its original splendor by three Paladins from the Isle of Avalon. Aided by a small number of loyal followers, the Paladins continue to maintain the temple as a monument to their great sea god. Pilgrims from many lands come here at various times of the year in order to drink from the Fountain of Poseidon (located inside the temple complex), the waters of which are said to possess miraculous healing properties.

27. TEMPLE OF HERU

A pyramid-shaped structure built by Qaddani immigrants some years ago. More than a dozen astrologers and priests operate the temple, which has a large and faithful following (mostly from the Qaddani ghetto located outside of the city proper).

28. TEMPLE OF SET

A 40-foot tower constructed of black basalt, most citizens of Tartessos give this foreboding edifice a wide berth. What transpires within is the subject of much conjecture; the iron doors of the temple remain barred to the public, and the tower is without windows. Some report having seen a group of thirteen cowled individuals, bearing serpent-headed staves, entering or exiting the temple at night. Where these dark figures go, or what their purpose might be, none seem to know.

29. RUINS

On this spot once stood the Temple of Atlas, a First Age structure of legendary proportions. For generations stone masons and engineers have stolen the pure white marble blocks of which the temple was constructed. As a result, only a few dozen large blocks (and countless smaller shards and pieces) still remain on the site.

30. ARKON THE COLLECTOR

Yet another abandoned temple, long since stripped of its religious trappings. The structure was purchased some years ago by the Atlantean wizard, Arkon, who converted the property into what is perhaps the most unusual pawn shop in the known world. Every foot of wall space has been used to house shelves filled with oddities of almost every imaginable sort: statuary, curios, scrolls, books, weapons, articles of clothing, jewelry, etc. (Arkon will buy or sell anything). Customers are served delicacies and fine liquors, and are allowed to wander the premises as desired. There is, however, one rule in this place: all who enter must buy or sell some item before they will be allowed to leave. Arkon keeps two brass golems handy for the rare customer who needs to be reminded of this small prerequisite.

31. ALCHEMICAL SUPPLIES

This shop caters primarily to alchemists, and sells most standard types of alchemical equipment and ingredients. Mixtures are not readily available here.

32. THE COMPLEAT ENCHANTER

All manner of magical paraphernalia is sold here, including ritual vestments, inks, chalks, censers, parchment, candles, and leather-bound spell books. Powders of conjuration (costing 100 G.P. per level of the desired creature) are occasionally available, as are the more common sorts of magic items. The shop is run by three magicians: a Turanian, a Kushite, and a Qaddani.

33. ALCHEMIST'S GUILD

Membership 200 G.P. per year. Lab space available for a fee (10 G.P. per level, per month). Those who rent space are responsible for any damage done to the facilities. Elixirs, powders, potions, and dusts are available for sale at standard prices +20%.

34. INSTITUTE OF OCCULT STUDIES

Research, laboratory, and instructional facilities on the premises. The Institute's library is fairly good, and costs 10 G.P. per day to use (25 G.P. for non-members). Lab fees are as per the Alchemist's Guild. Instruction is available in all magical fields of study except divine magic, at a cost of 50 G.P. per month (100 G.P. for non-members). Membership in the Institute costs 1,000 G.P. per year; benefits include lower rates for use of facilities, inclusion in the Institute's Official Book of Registry, and access to the Apprentice's Registry (a listing of reliable apprentice and novices). Members may also purchase scrolls (100 G.P. per level, per spell) and the more common types of magic items (+1 weapons, potions, powders, and dusts) at standard prices. A number of high level spell casters operate the Institute, which has a respectable reputation throughout the magical community.

35. ANTIQUE BOOKS

An Atlantean scholar owns this establishment, which deals in ancient books, scrolls, and tablets of all sorts. For a fee of 20 G.P., he will examine any written materials and evaluate their authenticity and worth. The proprietor will also buy written materials, but only if he deems them to be either very valuable or extremely rare.

36. HISTORIAN

Several scholars from the City Institute operate this small shop. For fees ranging from 10-2,000 + G.P. (based on the estimated difficulty of the desired service) they will research family trees, date artifacts, or locate and supply information on local (Mediterranean) history. As most research must be done off the premises, payment in advance is required, and a waiting period of 1-12 days (or more, in some cases) is customary.

37. SCRIBE

Over two dozen scribes are employed here. Services include translations of written works (20 G.P. per page), copies of written works (10-20 G.P. per page, depending on complexity), dictation (5 S.P. per page), and the notarization of documents and letters (1 G.P.).

38. THE CITY INSTITUTE

The only non-magical institute of higher learning in Tartessos. Relatively inexpensive (20 G.P. per month) instruction is available on such subjects as linguistics (most modern languages are taught), herb lore, mathematics, engineering, music, art, and history. Rudimentary reading and writing are also taught. The Institute's library is available free for research purposes, but is rated as only average in quality (several of the Institute's scholars use the private collections of certain local bibliophiles to augment their own research projects).

39. THE SCHOLAR'S INN

A quiet tavern frequented mainly by the faculty of the City Institute, visiting scholars from foreign lands, and other men and women of letters. The proprietor and most of the employees are multi-lingual. Prices are quite reasonable, and the food, drink, and rooms are above average in quality.

40. ACHERON

An inn done in the Qaddani style and featuring Qaddani food and drink. The proprietor is a Qaddani sorcerer of some renown, and many magicians frequent this place. Prices are high (two to five times standard rates for everything), but the inn's services are generally excellent. Private, curtained booths are available at no extra charge, and customers who order a full meal (20 G.P. and up) are given a complimentary bottle of wine. All weapons must be checked at the door; a dozen Scythian warriors (discreetly garbed as waiters) provide security, along with a few of the proprietor's "pets" (most notably a large manticore, kept in a sealed back room).

41. ZANNIBAR

Billed as "the pleasure palace of Tartessos," Zannibar is one of the city's most unusual establishments. On the first floor customers can lounge on silken cushions, dine on the finest delicacies, and indulge in costly wines, liquors, and narcotic herbs. The second floor is a comfortably furnished theatre, where exotic dancers, musicians, and performers offer a variety of decadent entertainments. The third floor is a garden and nympharium, replete with fountains, divans, and (for more discerning customers) splendidly accoutered private rooms. Prices are extravagant; 100 G.P. is the customary admittance fee, plus an additional 200 G.P. to gain access to either the second or third floor. Food, drinks, and all other considerations are extra (prices are from five to ten times the standard rates). Security is provided by more than twenty of the city's most formidable gladiators equipped (some say) with magical weaponry. Not surprisingly, only the wealthiest individuals frequent this place.

42. THE THARSHI GARDENS

A large park, once said to be quite beautiful, with winding flagstone trails, marble statuary, and ornately carved fountains. The gardens are now quite overgrown, and few people come here (especially at night, when thieves and vandals abound).

43. TARTESSOS REPERTORY THEATRE

A large, run-down housing/theatre complex. Performers of all types come here to take advantage of the inexpensive living facilities (1 S.P. per month for a single room) and to hone and practice their craft. The repertory group stages a variety of plays and events, most costing only a few copper pieces to attend.

44. THE BATHS

A public house of lavation. Available services include: bath (1 C.P.), shave and haircut (5 C.P.), clothes laundered (2 C.P.), scented oils (1 G.P.). The facility, which is owned by the city government, also doubles as a brothel of some small renown, and is quite popular with the middle class.

45. AMPHITHEATRE

An outdoor theatre with seating for approximately 2,000 individuals. Poorly maintained, it is only seldom used.

46. COLOSSEUM

An immense structure which seats approximately 20,000. Horse races, chariot races, and gladiatorial contests are held here on a weekly basis. The facility includes an underground housing/training complex for gladiators, cages for wild beasts and slaves, and an open-air tavern and restaurant. Huge and enthusiastic crowds attend most events, and wagering is a favorite pastime. The city government also owns and operates this facility, which is a big money-maker. Entrance costs anywhere from 2-20 G.P., depending on the nature of the spectacle.

47. THE COLOSSEUM TAVERN

A good-sized establishment which caters to the Colosseum crowd and is frequented by many gladiators and their owner/agents. Courtesans, gamblers, and dealers in contraband substances also come to this place, but tend to gravitate towards the private rooms located below ground in the tavern's lower level. This establishment is owned by the city, but operated by private individuals (who, for various reasons, prefer to maintain a degree of anonymity). Prices are about twice the standard rates, and quality is about average.

48. PUBLIC SQUARE

Once the site of a bustling open-air market, the public square is now frequented mainly by beggars, who hound passers-by for handouts. Once a week, however, crowds of people flock here to witness public executions (usually hangings, though more imaginative forms of capital punishment are employed on occasion). These popular events are usually also well-attended by street vendors (hawking all sorts of food and drink), pick-pockets, and a variety of unsavory individuals.

49. TRADE GUILDS

In this section of the city are found the guild houses of most of the city's tradesmen, including: stone masons, carpenters, porters, limners, drivers, etc. Individuals seeking to hire laborers of any sort may come here any day of the week to interview prospective personnel.

50. CLOTHIER

Specializing in fine attire. Prices are about five times standard rates for the high quality goods sold here. Less expensive articles are kept in a back room, which has a separate entrance; commoners are directed to this door by an armed guard.

51. COSTUMES

All manner of strange and colorful garb may be purchased here, including masks, stage apparel, and even make-up. Prices are about two to three times the cost of comparable (standard) apparel. Masks range from simple 1-2 C.P. items to very elaborate types costing as much as 75 G.P. or more. Custom-made costumes can also be ordered here, at a cost of about five times the standard rates.

52. CLOTHING IMPORTER

This shop features apparel imported from most of the countries of Mediterranea, northern Gondwana, and Jambu. Atlantean apparel is also available. Costs are about ten times standard rates.

53. FURRIER

Furs and hides of many sorts are available here, at costs ranging from 5-200 G.P. and up. The proprietor will also purchase raw hides and skins from trappers and traders.

54. JEWELERS

In this sector are found several shops, including goldsmiths, silversmiths, and gem cutters. Most will appraise items for free, and will purchase precious stones and metals (for about 60-80% of their actual worth). Prices are usually quite high, with custom-made items costing as much as ten times their material value.

55. FRAGRANCES

All sorts of costly scents, incense and oils are available here, at about twice standard rates.

56. APOTHECARY

Most types of herbs, plants, and remedies are available here, at two to three times standard rates (as much as ten times standard rates for rare and imported substances).

57. THARSHI IMPORTS

This large shop features imported hardwoods (ebony and teak, about 25 G.P. per lb.), ivory (20 G.P. per lb.), crystal, and rattan. The proprietor will sometimes buy goods of this nature from independent traders and merchants.

58. METAL WORKS

This foundry/smith complex carries all standard types of metal articles, plus: copper ingots (1 G.P. per lb.), iron ingots (1 S.P. per lb.), lead ingots (1 C.P. per lb.), and other raw metals. Sheeting will be made to order at a cost of 2-8 S.P. per square foot, and cages cost approximately 100 G.P. per 10 x 10 x 10 cubic foot. Custom articles of all sorts can be ordered. Quality is generally quite good.

59. ARMORER

Most types of leather and metal armors (and shields) can be purchased here for about twice standard rates. Quality is fair to good; custom work can be arranged for a fee.

60. BLADESMITH

Swords, knives, axe and spear heads of all types can be purchased here at two to three times standard rates. Quality is good.

61. BOWYER/FLETCHER

Short and long bows of wood and horn can be purchased here at standard rates + 10%. Custom-made bows of excellent quality can be ordered for about twice standard rates.

62. MERCENARY'S GUILD

Membership 20 G.P. per year. Bodyguards, scouts, sentinels, and most types of men-at-arms may be hired here at standard rates (plus a 10 G.P. per level guild fee). Most of the mercenaries for hire are of low-level abilities, and not all are of reputable character.

63. THE SWORD AND SCABBARD

A popular hang-out for mercenary men-at-arms of all types. Arm-wrestling, drinking, and knife-throwing contests add to the lively (and often wild) atmosphere of this establishment. Prices are average, and the services (food, drink, and rooms) are of decent quality.

64. TRADER'S

A large shop/warehouse complex which carries most adventuring supplies, including tack and harness, tools, rations, tents, blankets, and trapping and mining equipment. Prices are 50% above standard rates, but only quality merchandise is sold here.

65. THARSHI TRANSPORT

This establishment sells all manner of carts, wagons, and chariots for about twice standard prices. Quality is good.

66. WOODWORKS

This large facility carries lumber (1 S.P. per square foot and up) and most types of wooden furnishings. Popular items include tables (2 + G.P. per square foot), chairs (1-10 + G.P.), cabinets (20-200 + G.P.), and shelves (6 x 10 feet; 10-200 G.P.). Custom-made are available on request, and quality ranges from good to excellent.

67. LIVESTOCK

Horses, camels, elephants and many domestic breeds are available here. Prices are about average, though imported livestock of good quality may cost two to three times standard rates. The quality of horses available here can vary greatly at times.

68. TANNER

All sorts of leather goods are available here. Prices are about average, quality is generally very good, and custom work can be ordered (for about twice standard rates).

69. THE BESTIARY

A large and most eccentric establishment which deals in a variety of unusual animals and "pets". Popular offerings include constrictors (25 G.P. per foot), poisonous snakes (20-200+ G.P.), spiders (10-100 G.P.), piranha (20 G.P.), hawks, falcons, and many species of birds. Creatures such as young griffons, wyverns, chimeras, etc. are sometimes available (prices average about 200 G.P. per level of the creature), as are wild animals of many sorts. Trained animals are also available at times, though at considerably higher prices.

70. THE LOWER END

This causeway marks the outer boundaries of Tartessos' lower end, the seediest and most dangerous section of the city. Tharshi sentinels will seldom enter this section of the city unless they have to. Overcrowding and squalid conditions make this a most unpleasant (and often dangerous) area. Here also are found the ethnic sectors known as ghettos.

71. TATTOO PARLOR

The owner of this establishment is an expert on many forms of tattooing and body decoration, including the pattern-scarring ornamentation favored by certain Gondwanan tribes. Prices run about 1 G.P. per square inch of work. This place is frequented by many types of individuals, including seamen, corsairs, mercenary fighters, thieves, courtesans, etc.

72. THE MEDITERRANEAN INN

A truly foul establishment frequented by rogues, smugglers, and other unsavory types. Prices are about 50% below standard rates, and the food, drink, and rooms are of poor quality. Opiated wine and other illicit substances are sold (and used) openly. Fights, knifings, and muggings are common occurrences in and around this place.

73. THE BLACK MARKET

This large, marketplace is always open, and always crowded. Dozens of supposedly illegal enterprises operate here openly, including: fences, smugglers, narcotics peddlers, dealers in toxic powders and venoms, and harlots. Dozens upon dozens of small shops and stalls line the square, and fortune tellers, astrologers, charlatans, harlequins, and food vendors compete for the business of passers-by. Pick-pockets, muggers, beggars, and street urchins flock to this place by the hundreds. Prices are generally exorbitant (two to ten times standard rates); however, it is truly said of the Black Market that one can buy anything here, if one has enough gold to pay.

74. THE SLAVER'S MARKET

Another open-air marketplace, this one specializing in slaves of almost all nationalities. Prices range from 50-5,000 G.P. and up; strong laborers and attractive females bring the highest prices. From time to time, non-human slaves (such as aesir, dwarves, andaman, nethermen, goblins and even elves) become available. Most of the slavers will purchase individuals from independent sellers without asking questions.

75. TURANIAN GHETTO

Over a thousand Turanian immigrants live here, in white-washed hovels made of sun-baked bricks. A thriving hashish trade goes on, pretty much out in the open. There are a few, small shops in this sector, most of which feature inexpensive goods of little quality. Thieves and cutthroats abound, especially at night.

76. DRAVIDIAN GHETTO

Dravidians (Meluhhans and Veddeans) are in the minority in Tartessos, and tend to keep a low profile. A few small shrines and shops are found here, and a cult of Dravidian assassins is believed to have a secret meeting place in this sector.

77. KHITAN GHETTO

The largest and cleanest of the ghettos, this sector is populated by more than 5,000 Khitan immigrants. A few shops, temples, and opium dens exist, most of which are small and relatively inconspicuous. There is at least one school for the martial arts, but entrance is said to be difficult for non-Khitans (a test of some sort is usually required of applicants who are not of Khitan blood).

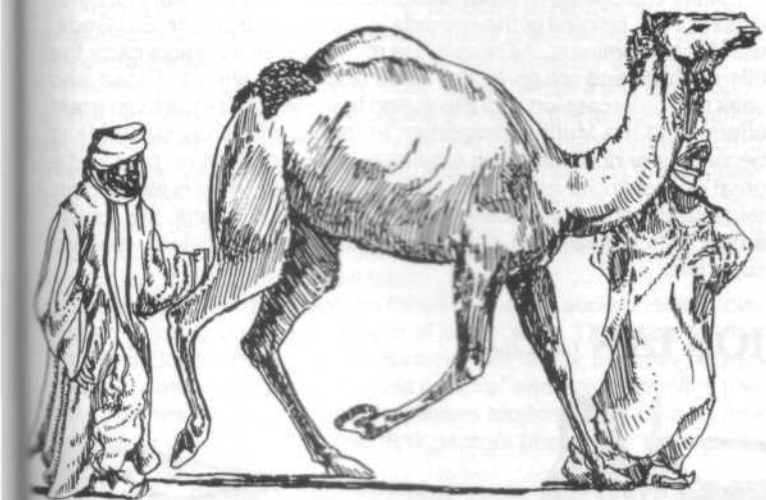
78. GONDWANAN GHETTO

About 4,000 Gondwanans live here, most hailing from Qaddan and Nubia. A pyramid-like Qaddani temple (said to be occupied by the members of an obscure necromantic cult) is here, along with a smattering of small shops and taverns. Nubian mercenaries often stay in this sector when not employed elsewhere.

TURAN (tur-AN)

The name "Turan" is derived from an ancient, now-dead language, and means "endless desert." It has long been applied to the Great Desert of Turan — and, by extension, to the whole Turanian subcontinent — and is today the name given specifically to that desert region of the subcontinent not claimed by any of the surrounding nations.

The precise bounds of Turan are vague in places, but the desert land is bordered to the southwest by Joktan, to the west by the Red Sea (and a tiny strip of Qaddan), with the Wilderness of Zin to the northwest, Sheba to the southeast and east, and an arm of the Sea of Baku to the north. It is a desolate land of dry sand and harsh temperatures, and those who can survive in the Deep Desert are hardy people indeed.



The Turanians are slim, dark-skinned, and black-haired humans related to the neighboring peoples of Zin. They differ considerably from the Sheban and Joktanian peoples, who have Atlantean and Hesperian blood not common to the Turanian people. These desert nomads usually are found wearing turbans and loose, layered clothing (which helps them keep cool) — pantaloons, blouse, cloak, and so on. They are adept in handling camels and traveling the deserts between oases with small flocks, pitching brightly-colored tents in a new camp every few days and then moving on. They are aggressive, independent, hot-tempered people, who generally resent outsiders and attack them on the slightest provocation. Joktan, Sheba, Qaddan, and the Tribes of Zin have all felt the explosive violence of the Turanian nomads at frequent intervals, though the Turanians fight among themselves almost as much as they do with their enemies. It sometimes seems that Turanian tempers flare in direct proportion to the number of people gathered in one spot, and thus there has never been much success in uniting the various bands for a common purpose. Scholars have speculated that the Turanian nomads, if ever united by some common, overriding cause — such as a fanatic warrior faith — would be virtually unstoppable. So far, though, no such cause or faith has succeeded in bringing the tribes together.

There are scores of individual nomad bands, each led by a chieftan or sheik. The bands wander where they will, on rare occasions joining together for some exploit requiring common effort, but later falling out and quarrelling or splitting apart. There are many long-standing feuds among these bands, some pursued with a single-minded ruthlessness that might seem appalling to outsiders.

The nomad bands acknowledge higher authority only grudgingly, but each band does belong to one of the seven Tribes of Turan. These tribes are traditional groupings, supposedly descended from seven great Founders who originated the Turanian nation. Each tribe is led by a caliph, who is acknowledged as the direct descendent of the tribe's Founder. The caliphs are considered to possess exceptional wisdom and prestige, and are often consulted to settle problems within the tribe — but always on a voluntary basis; no Turanian nomad would readily accept authority imposed from above, and caliphs have been killed for attempting such a thing many times through Turan's volatile history.

The caliphs are in turn ruled over by the sultan, the hereditary monarch of Turan. Descended from a great Turanian hero who was said to have brought together the Seven Tribes to resist the Women of the West (probably Hesperia's Amazons) — the only time, even in legend, that the tribes are mentioned as cooperating. The sultan is always the eldest surviving male in direct line of descent from the First Sultan.

The sultan dwells in the city of Ispahan (is-pa-HAHN) which is located in a large oasis deep in the heart of the Turanian desert. Ispahan contains only a handful of permanent buildings, most importantly the massive stone sultan's palace, with its soaring, minaret-capped towers. The palace is surrounded by a sea of tent buildings set amidst the date palms and water pools of the oasis. It is said that the First Sultan summoned several friendly Jinn to construct the palace at Ispahan to serve as a constant reminder of the victory of the tribes over those who sought to enslave them. (Actually, Hesperian records leave the impression that Turan was conquered, but proved too hard to hold on to because of the harsh climate and barren terrain.)

Within the palace walls are said to be vast stores of treasure, accumulated over the generations by many former sultans. Traditionally, a seventh part of all goods acquired by the tribes from their raids must be given to the sultan, and the sultan also imposes a tax on tribes which seek his aid. As the caliphs deal with disputes within the tribe, the sultan is often consulted in matters which affect two or more tribes.

The sultan, or one of his trusted *wazirs* (advisors) grants public audience once each day, to decide on cases brought before him. Judgements which are submitted to him on the first six days of the week are pronounced on the seventh day. All judgements are final, and it is deemed unwise to waste the sultan's time with trivial problems.

Both the sultan and the wazirs are expected to treat caliphs and sheiks as equals, not as subjects, and are supposed to be completely unbiased in their judgements. Should a decision meet with the disapproval of six of the seven caliphs, they can overturn it. (This is the only way to appeal an edict of the sultan.) From time to time disgruntled tribesmen have murdered sultans or wazirs who found against them, but usually the presitge attached to the hereditary monarch protects the sultan from such attempts. Caliphs and sultans have done much to temper the fury of some of the sheik feuds through the judgements they hand down.

Each tribe has a territory over which its bands range, though some bands cross the territorial boundaries from time to time. These territories are Tamayah (ta-ma-YAH), Jabal (ja-BAL), Sasan (SA-san), Ibrah (IB-rah), Suti (SU-tee), Arawan (a-RA-wan), and Shamar (sha-MAR). In addition, the territory around Ispahan, Arabea (a-RAY-be-a) is considered to belong to all tribes equally and is treated as a separate area of Turan. The tribes are named for the particular territory which they occupy. Though by and large a nomadic people, the Turanians do have a few semi-permanent settlements, which dot the desert oases and serve as places where tribes can meet and trade. Ispahan is the largest, and the only one with permanent stone buildings. (In addition to the sultan's palace, Ispahan boasts the Public Bath and the Temple of Eloah; all three are splendidly furnished and have gilded ornaments on the walls and minarets.)

The others are primarily small encampments, permanent in the sense that there are always people there, but with a constant population turnover as some Turanians drift away, to be replaced by the others. Here Turanians fresh from raids turn over plundered properties, slaves, and other possessions. There are also regular caravans which bring goods from further away (even from Qaddan, Sheba, and Joktan). Slave merchants are common, selling foreign captives to the highest bidder in feverish, chaotic auctions. The Turanians take great pride in the ownership of foreign slaves, and are always eager to acquire such symbols of superiority and wealth.

The oasis villages include Madaan (ma-DA-an), Sabaan (sa-BA-an), Tamaan (ta-MA-an), Salaan (sa-LA-an) and Nebetaan (ne-be-TA-an). The tents that make up these villages come in all sizes and shapes, always brightly colored with family patterns and designs.

At Madaan lies the sacred burial place of all Turanian sultans, caliphs, and great heroes, carved out of solid rock in an impressive cliff face. Golden statues and ornaments are found throughout the tomb chambers and passages. When a respected leader or hero dies, the pilgrimage to the burial chambers follows immediately after a funeral ceremony in which the body is burnt and the ashes collected in a golden burial urn. Ordinary tribesmen are not interred in urns; their ashes are scattered over the sands they roamed in life.

The people of Turan are proud warriors. Every man in the nomad band is expected to be a fighter before all other things. They are skilled in the handling of horses and camels, and are as fierce and capable in combat as the horse-nomads of Scythia. Like the Scythians, the Turanians are awesome fighters and extremely warlike, but the Turanians are somewhat more civilized (there is no blood-drinking, scalping, or skinning of enemies in Turanian conflicts, nor are their funeral traditions so murderous). They pose a constant threat to caravans passing in proximity of their territories.

The Turanians believe that they gain merit in the afterlife by killing enemies and taking the possessions of those they slay — especially women, children, livestock, and prized personal possessions. Women and children of the slain become part of the victor's family. Blood ties, however, lead to feuds, and he who slays another Turanian may expect vengeance from the dead man's kin. No Turanian nomad will refuse a fight, and indeed they are always eager for such encounters. Their military organization, however, is poor, being limited to small groups of 20 — 200 warriors in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

The nomads almost always fight mounted, riding camels or horses into combat. They are superb mounted archers, but are not noted for being able to coordinate their attacks. The battle lust tends to make them hard to control; some may spur straight into battle, while others might stop in the midst of a fight to despoil the bodies of the slain or to loot an enemy camp. Though they will sometimes hire out as inexpensive mercenaries when a good fight is in the offing, they are not greatly sought after by other nations, and generally are used only when nothing better is available. Although bloodthirsty and quarrelsome, Turanian nomads are completely trustworthy once they have sworn an oath. Oaths are sacred, and not given lightly. Once given, they are honored until death or fulfillment releases the oath-taker from his obligations. In the absence of an oath, no treachery is too great to be attempted, if a nomad thinks he might gain from it.

Nomad society is very simply organized. At the top of the social scale is the royal Class, which consists of Sultans, Caliphs, and Sheiks and their families, plus a few exceptional warriors given this honor by decree of the sultan. Ranking within the class is according to these same divisions — Sultans, Caliphs, Sheiks, and Heroes.

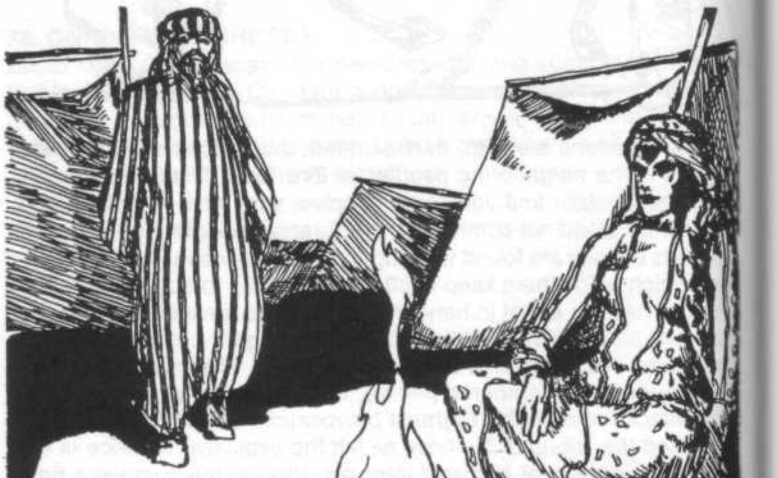
All other Turanian males are part of the Warrior Class, except for those who enter the elitist religious community of Turan. The class has no true division, but prestige is based on the number of enemies slain in battle. In addition to being warriors, the nomads are also herdsmen, merchants, and the like — basically, every member of the band must be skilled in every other important job necessary for individual and group survival.

Next lowest in Turanian society are all women, with the exception of those females born members of a Royal family. Royal females are still of less importance than their male relatives, though a few gain some influence by learning magic. By and large, though, women are considered to be decidedly inferior, and are expected to be completely subservient to men. Males may keep as many wives as they can provide for, and those of the Royal class often keep a host of concubines in a large harem. Women not born to royal families rarely receive education beyond the absolute essentials of cooking, cleaning, and serving their masters, though now and then an exceptional man will see to it that his wives are educated.

At the bottom of the social structure are Slaves, foreign captives acquired in raids or purchased from caravan slave-traders. Most slaves are treated very harshly, and are often brutally punished for the most trivial offenses. There are two other groupings which have emerged as separate social classes, though they are somewhat less formally structured. One is the Scholar Class. Turanian scholars are a rare breed, usually serving as wazirs to the sultan or a caliph. Scholars in the service of the sultan or the caliphs are accorded respect nearly equal to that given to their masters. Those who have no Royal employer are treated as if they were warriors of many kills. Wizards of all types are considered to be Scholars in Turan, as are individuals who (by superior knowledge or skill) gain an exceptional reputation for wisdom or arcane powers.

Finally, the priests of Turan stand separate and apart from all other classes. The religion of the nomads is a witchly cult of the Old Gods, with Eloah dominant. All priests are males; these warlocks carry the title of Mufti, and are given the same respect as sheiks. Those who seek their intercession with Eloah and the other Old Gods must grant offerings to the Mufti in proportion to the benefits they seek. Many become very rich from such offerings, and enjoy both respect and a great deal of power among the individual bands. There is little higher religious organization, however, for as in all other things, the Turanians do not believe in a complicated hierarchy of distant, isolated superiors.

JOKTAN (JOK-tan)



Located on the southwestern coast of the Turanian peninsula, Joktan is bordered by the Red Sea to the south and west, Turan to the north and northeast, and Sheba directly to the east. It is a fertile coastal land, not so ideal as Sheba, but still pleasant compared to the stark desert of Turan. Its people are tall and fair to behold, with light brown skin and straight, black hair. The region was first settled by Atlantean colonists in the First Age. At that time, Joktan and Sheba were united as part of a single, broad coastal province of the Atlantean Empire. Following the end of the First Age, the colonies relapsed into barbarism. Unification of the area followed again when Hesperia's Amazons swept into the subcontinent. But where Sheba copied many Hesperian ways, Joktan was reluctant to accept the female-ucts imported from distant lands. Even Atlantean goods, imported via Tharshesh and Qaddan are fairly common in Bersheba's fabulous markets. It is a beautiful city as well, with luxuriant parks and tree-lined promenades. Most impressive of all is the Queen's Palace, with its Atlantean columns, fountains, pools, and gardens. The palace is filled with the fragrance of myrrh trees from far-off Punt. Rare plants, birds, and small animals are common on the Palace grounds, giving it an exotic and almost pastoral atmosphere.

Other important and impressive buildings around Bersheba include The Library of Bersheba, The College of All Sciences, The Sheban Astrological Observatory, The Temple of Ishtar, The Royal Museum, and The Barrow of Baal. Each lies outside the city proper, surrounded by garden parks. The Queen of Sheba has complete control of the military, and is the ultimate authority in the realm. Through the generations, the Queens of Sheba have commonly delegated much of the actual management of the nation to others. Her primary assistants in government are the Princesses of Sheba (the title is conferred upon every female member of the Royal Family). However, the Queen can also select other people of merit, whether male, female, royal, or common to function as viceregal authorities. Ultimately all are answerable to the Queen, functioning to relieve her from the tedious aspects of maintaining a cohesive and powerful nation on a day-to-day basis.

The Queen may take as many husbands as she desires, but her principle male companion holds the position of Chief Advisor to the Queen. As such, his powers are fewer than those accorded to the Princesses, but he holds more rank than any of the other individuals granted viceregal powers. The position, like all grants of power in Sheba, is given entirely at the discretion of the Queen; there need be no Chief Advisor at all. Male members of the Royal Families, including any of the Queen's consorts other than the Chief Advisor, hold the title of Prince. A prince has no official authority, but has the status of a High Citizen, and is thus accorded respect and privileges of various kinds. But though they have no official powers, males have been known from time to time to exercise considerable influence over the Queen, or over various Princesses or other important leaders. Manipulation of Sheba's female rulers by ambitious males is not at all uncommon.

The people of Sheba are divided into four basic social classes. High Citizens are people of wealth and property, including the Royal Families, Common Citizens are the bulk of the populace, while Low Citizens are people without work or without a proper home. Slaves may be born into their class, or slavery may be imposed as a sentence by Queen appointed Criminal judges. Most slaves are slaves for life, though indentured servitude for a set term of years is also possible. Life-slaves can be given manumission by their owners, or by direct decree from the Queen.

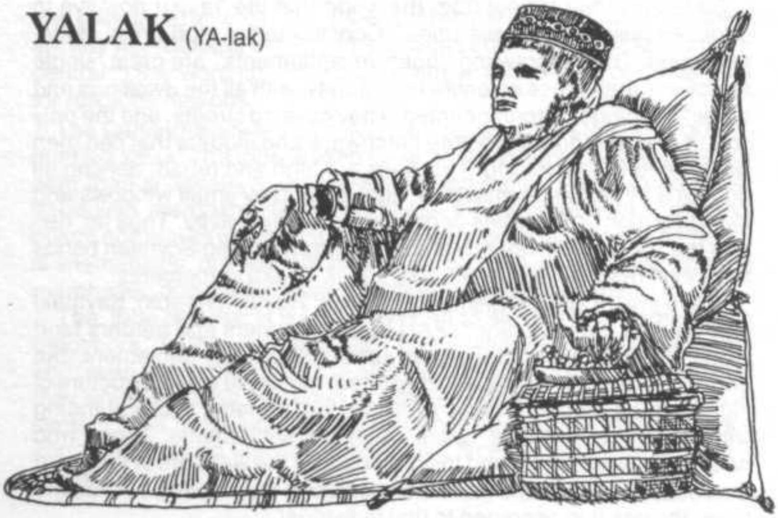
Religion in Sheba

A powerful death cult with fiercely necromantic overtones once flourished in Sheba. The cult had a large following that formerly included several Queens from past eras. One of these Queens allotted the northern half of the island of Bathsheba to the cult for the construction of barrows (burial mounds). Within these barrows, the newly dead were transformed into undead beings. These vile creatures guarded their earthly possessions within the mound, and served the High Necromancer and the patron deity, Baal, as powerful slave-followers. The greatest lures of this ancient cult were said to be the promise of undead immortality, and certain decadent, self-gratifying rituals (similar to those observed by the Sons of Belial and the Gorgons). Outlawed long ago, the cult holds no influence in modern Sheba, though some claim that it still has a few followers in certain isolated regions. The northern part of Bathseba is full of barrows (now sealed and kept under guard), the last visible remnants of this once powerful cult.

Most of the current population of Sheba now worships the goddess Ishtar, one of the Young Gods. A cult of pleasure and sensuality, this religion has been gaining converts steadily over the past century. Though many minor Young Gods (and several of the omnipresent Old Gods) have significant cults of their own, none is particularly strong.

Astrology and Sorcery are the two fields of magic most commonly associated with Sheba, with many adherents. Both have been declining somewhat of late, but they are still associated in the minds of most foreigners, at least, with the Sheban realm.

YALAK (YA-lak)



The peninsula of Yalak is surrounded on three sides by water. The eastern border connects the region with the rest of the Turanian subcontinent, and its entire length runs along the lands claimed by the Tribes of Zin. South is the Mediterranean Sea, north the Euxine, and the northwestern boundary is the Strait of the Symplegades. It is a rugged land, less arid than other regions of Turan, dotted with volcanos and broken by mountain ranges and other natural obstacles. The region supports few inhabitants, save for the reclusive humans known as the Yalaku (ya-la-KU).

The Yalaku are brown-skinned and black-haired as a rule, usually slender in build and of average height. They wear simple robes, brown or green being the favored colors. Little is known about the Yalaku, because they avoid contact with outsiders as much as possible. Surrounded by fierce tribes bent on domination, most Yalaku have turned their backs on the outside world — literally as well as figuratively — and have very little interest in dealing with outsiders on any level.

Among themselves the Yalaku are friendly and open, much interested in artistic pursuits such as music, painting, storytelling, and philosophy. Entirely self-sufficient, they have no need to trade with others. Some lower-class Yalaku are willing to trade opium and hashish (both common in Yalak) for iron, bronze, gold, and silver; traders from Tharshesh have a monopoly on this trade, and find the Yalaku drugs very much in demand in their distant markets. But even this trade is very limited, dependent strictly upon the whim of those Yalaku who choose to acknowledge the existence of the outside world.

According to legend, Yalak began as a refuge for a band of discontented Atlantean scholars near the end of the First Age. These, the First Sages, sought to put into practice in Yalak their views of an ideal society, a place where the pursuit of knowledge and culture would be paramount, and never again subject to the vagaries of economics and politics. They brought knowledge of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Arts and Sciences, Philosophy, and Metalworking to Yalak, and convinced a number of barbaric nomads to become the citizens of their ideal state. As their realm began to develop, a new culture emerged, and became increasingly estranged from the rest of the world.

The First Sages seem not to have foreseen that these isolated Yalaku settlements would stagnate in many areas as a result of their lack of contact with other cultures.

Indeed, knowledge of the outside world has practically vanished amongst the Yalaku, with ancient stories and ignorant speculation and includes a major city. This is the seaport of Aram (AR-am), a haven for Sheban trading vessels and an outpost for the realm's army and navy. It is small but crowded, with numerous shops and taverns There is a heavy flavor of magic and intrigue throughout this seaport, where the military, merchants, citizens, and foreigners mingle and meet in a confused hodgepodge of cultures and peoples.

Only a quarter of the island of Raamah is set aside for the seaport and the military fortifications that protect it. The rest is reserved for the use of the High Citizen Class of Sheba, though most of the island is still wild and untraveled. Only a handful of estates have been granted; the rest of Raamah is largely a wilderness where bandits and other unsavory types find refuge. There are also griffons and other dangerous animals in the central part of the island.

Most important of these creatures is a nearly extinct species of lion which still roams the island. Smaller than the familiar Veldt Lion, and with a golden-red tint to its fur and mane, the Sheban Lion is a solitary creature. It is the official symbol of Sheba, depicted in art and architecture of all sorts. The Queen of Sheba keeps trained Sheban Lions in her palace, and is always accompanied by a brace of them anywhere she goes. They are also crucial to many of the rituals and ceremonies held on festival days throughout the year.

Mainland Sheba is less fertile than the islands. There are few estates here, and the land is mostly given over to herders, hunters, and farmers. Most are of Sheba's Common Class, though other classes are represented to a lesser extent. Small settlements dot the coast, primarily inhabited by extended family groups. They are not always permanently settled in a given place, for most mainlanders cling to the old semi-nomadic existence of herding and hunting. Their place in society is important, for they support the island populations and the cities and villages of Sheba. There are also larger, more permanent settlements, hamlets, and villages along the coast. These are primarily stop-overs for trading vessels working along the coast. Many include naval detachments — a single ship with sailors and marines — stationed for a long period in the same port. The two largest havens, Sabalah (sa-BA-lah) and Kemul (ke-MAL) are mostly devoted to the trade fleets, with many shops and taverns but a small resident population.

Inland along the rough terrain bordering the Great Desert of Turan are small military settlements designed to defend Sheba from tribal raids out of the interior. These fortified outposts would be of little value against a concerted attack, but the proverbial impatience and disunion of Turanian tribesmen makes such a cohesive effort out of the question. They draw the attention of raiders away from the coastal regions, but are well enough defended to hold against the typical hit and run attacks of the Turanian nomads.

Sheba owes its existence to the Atlanteans, who settled the region in the First Age. Many Atlantean traditions were preserved after the fall of the empire, and these concepts shaped later Sheban society. The descendents of Sheba's Atlantean colonists were later overrun by Amazons from Hesperia. From these conquerers the Shebans came to embrace the concept of female domination in society, which continued even after Hesperia withdrew to deal with local problems. Isolated after the Amazons were gone, the Sheban people emerged with a strong hybrid culture all their own, one which has made them one of the world's leading economic powers. Sheban culture combines many interesting facets of its two great predecessors. From the Atlanteans, they have borrowed architectural inspiration and a deep love for magic and the sciences. The Amazons contributed the female-dominant social structure, the rigid authoritarianism of Hesperia's empire, and coordinated mind-body superiority as an ideal to be achieved and maintained. But the Shebans have replaced militarism with an Atlantean-derived quest for magical knowledge, and with the desire to extend and dominate their trading empire. Sheban ideals are not those of either Atlantis or Hesperia — they are purely Sheban interpretations of previous concepts.

The people of Sheba live to accumulate wealth. To this end they have built their trading empire until it now embraces the shores of the sea of Baku, the Erythraen Sea, and the Red Sea. Their ships ply these waters to the exclusion of virtually all other merchants, and travel far beyond, as well. The resulting maritime trade empire has kept lines of communication open among all the major nations of the hemisphere.

Within their sphere of influence, Sheba is the richest — and also the most powerful — of nations. Their trade alliances have forged them a power base as effective in some ways as a true colonial empire. Their trade partners, and particularly Kush, Joktan, Magan, Marhasi, Massawa, Meluhha, Punt, and Qaddan, are pledged to support Sheba from outside aggression. This solidarity is the basis for Sheba's survival, for the realm's actual military resources are slim, and each other nation is individually rather weak (there are those who would say that even the combined force of these allied realms is of questionable value). For their part, the Shebans are content to entrust their survival to their allies, their small but effective navy, a simple militia army, and mercenary soldiers hired with Sheban gold.

Only the Turanian tribes (including those of the Wilderness of Zin) currently pose any threat to Sheba, but despite an almost continuous state of war, the fragmented tribes have been easily contained by militia and mercenaries along the frontier. Border skirmishes, raids, and retaliations have been frequent, though generally inconsequential. Hence the Shebans see no real need to mobilize any full-scale attack against Turan. The High Citizens, safe on their island fortresses, apparently feel quite secure. Sheban trader-captains bring more than material goods across the eastern oceans.

They spread new ideas and information, linking far-off lands and cultures and promoting an end to isolation and fear. Though their contacts with nations other than Sheba's regular trade partners are irregular, their very existence has helped bring about change and growth in many remote regions.

There are several families in Sheba who own and operate major trade companies, including the Queen herself, who controls the largest mercantile concern of all.

These great trading houses are made up of High Citizens content to sit back and reap the profits of their companies, spending what they earn on enlarging their companies, their estates, and their personal possessions. Common Citizens of Sheba manage, captain, and crew the ships and warehouses of these large companies.

There are many small trading establishments as well, some consisting of no more than a single ship. These independent traders seek out profitable ports and routes not already dominated by larger companies, serving to spread Sheban culture even further afield.

The merchant network trades less in Sheban products than in goods exchanged among distant nations. Tin is Sheba's only abundant natural resource, mined around Kemul. The metal is carried on some merchant ships, but more often cargos consist strictly of rare products from all over the hemisphere, from distant lands most realms wouldn't even know of if not for Sheban traders. This is the real importance of Sheba: not natural resources, but trade, the spread of news and ideas, and the linking of far-flung realms.

Sheba's shipbuilders are among the most knowledgable in the world, and are fine craftsmen. Their trade ships are based on an old Atlantean design; large-hulled for carrying large cargos, and extremely seaworthy and deadly. Ships are built and repaired at Bersheba and Aram, with additional repair facilties at Sabalah and Kemul.

The trade empire of Sheba even maintains links with the other major trading power of the world today, Tharshesh. One point of contact is distant Marhasi, in southern Gondwana, the southernmost realm of both trading realms' regular trade voyages. But it is the powerful nation of Qaddan that serves as the main point of contact between the two trading empires. A narrow land bridge and canal controlled by Qaddan divides the Red Sea from the Mediterranean; caravans and ships transport goods between ports on each sea, allowing the Shebans in the Red Sea and Tharsheshians in the Mediterranean to exchange goods (to the profit of Qaddan). Had Qaddan not risen to its present strength fairly quickly, either Sheba or Tharshesh would probably have seized the region long ago. Both covet the isthmus, but neither is willing to imperil their trade link by alienating Qaddan.

Sheba's capital city, Bersheba, is a fascinating place. The whole city seems like a bazaar, filled with shops displaying the finest products imported from distant lands. Even Atlantean goods, imported via Tharshesh and Qaddan are fairly common in Bersheba's fabulous markets. It is a beautiful city as well, with luxuriant parks and tree-lined promenades. Most impressive of all is the Queen's Palace, with its Atlantean columns, fountains, pools, and gardens. The palace is filled with the fragrance of myrrh trees from far-off Punt. Rare plants, birds, and small animals are common on the Palace grounds, giving it an exotic and almost pastoral atmosphere.

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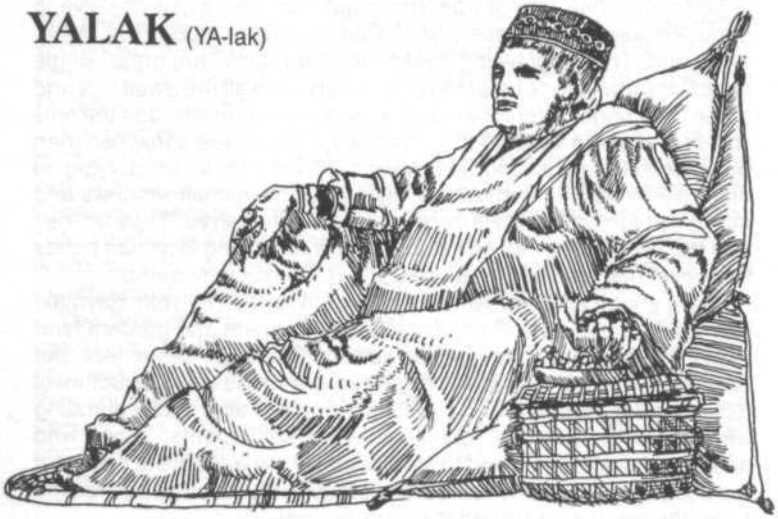

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The First Sages seem not to have foreseen that these isolated Yalaku settlements would stagnate in many areas as a result of their lack of contact with other cultures.

Indeed, knowledge of the outside world has practically vanished amongst the Yalaku, with ancient stories and ignorant speculation now dominating their beliefs. Travelers' tales and epic poems and songs are the basis for much of this "knowledge," leaving the Yalaku convinced that the outside world is populated strictly by demons, fantastic creatures, and savage barbarians. When exposed to the Arts, Sciences, or accomplishments of other cultures, they tend to dismiss these as being of no value (especially if they are at odds with Yalaku tradition or belief).

So total is their retreat from the world that the Yalaku now live in large, enclosed, "gateless cities." Constructed of mud-brick, stone, and wood. These sprawling "beehive settlements" are great, single structures that house an entire community, with all the dwellings and other "buildings" interconnected. They have no streets, and the only way in or out is through rooftop hatchways and ladders that can then be lowered to the ground. The walls are high and broad, defying all entrance by would-be attackers; light is let in by small windows and skylights high on the walls or on the roofs themselves. Thus far, neither the Tribes of Zin nor any of the occasional roving Scythian bands have ever made a serious effort to attack Yalaku settlements.

There are, in all, 3 settlements in Yalak: Huyuk (HU-yok), Kaymakl (kay-ma-KEL), and Xanthus (ZAN-thoos). Farmers and herders tend crops and animals on the plains surrounding each settlement, but only rarely venture further afield. Indeed, the whole social structure of Yalak is built around a basic principle that equates social standing with the amount of time spent within the settlements. Those who need never venture beyond the protection of the walls are at the top of the social scale, and the more time someone must spend outside the lower the position accorded to that individual.

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Though detailed information on Yalaku culture is understandably somewhat scarce, it is known that their society is divided into six orders, or social classes. Of these, the Sages are by far the most powerful and respected, and serve as the keepers of Yalaku's traditional beliefs. Each settlement is governed by a council of Sages, presided over by the oldest of their number (known as The Council Elder). The primary concern of each of the councils is to maintain the sanctity and "purity" of the Yalaku culture. Once each year (or as circumstances dictate) The Council Elders will call a High Council, where matters concerning the Yalaku people as a whole may be discussed.

The other classes, in order of importance, are the Citizens (craftsmen, laborers, etc.), Farmers, Herders, Hunters, and Outcasts. Only Herders and Hunters are permitted to venture any distance from the settlement. Those Yalaku who, in word or deed, have failed to adhere to the traditional beliefs, are branded as outcasts. As punishment for their "crimes," Outcasts are forbidden to enter the settlements, and most fend for themselves in the outside world. They are considered insane by the Yalaku, and are avoided at all costs. Conversely, Outcasts are the most commonly encountered Yalaku where foreigners are concerned, and dominate the trade in hashish and opium.

Conspicuous by their absence are any sort of warriors. The philosophy of the Yalaku is to retreat within the safety of the community in the face of danger. They have some weapons — spears, swords, and so forth — adapted for indoor fighting, but these are hardly ever handled even in practice. Theoretically, everyone would play an equal *share in the defense of a settlement, though Hunters, with the most* experience in handling weapons and dealing with crises, would form the core of any city fighting which might occur.

Within the community, everything is shared equally, even to the point of group marriages. These marriages are completely open; no one is bound for life to any mate or set of mates, and there is no set number or proportion of members to any of these informal groups. Essentially, each settlement is one great family, with periodic rearrangements in the groupings of mates. The children are raised in a communal fashion without fathers or mothers, but with a host of uncles, aunts, brothers, and sisters. The Yalaku are skilled in crafting flint, obsidian, horn, bone, copper, lead, and leather. Their work in these mediums is generally excellent, and is especially coveted by traders. Similarly, their mastery of the Arts and Sciences is impressive, though they know virtually nothing of any area outside of their own narrowly defined fields.

Yalaku religion is an amalgamation of the Old Atlantean religion and the cults of the barbarous tribes which joined the First Sages. Primarily, it is a Clerical cult of Atlas, personified by the largest of Yalak's volcanos, Mt. Attala (at-TA-la) in the Tauru (ta-U-ru) Mountains. The Yalaku see themselves as the New Chosen People of Atlas, a superior race of Mankind. The fierce tribes that border on Yalak sometimes raid the land, but have long since learned that the communities themselves are practically impervious to attack. They content themselves with killing, enslaving, or harassing Yalaku Outcasts, burning or carrying off crops, and ravaging the countryside before moving on. Once the raids are over, the lower-class Yalaku go outside to set things in order once more.

THE WILDERNESS OF ZIN

Actually an extension of Turan proper, the Wilderness of Zin is not so much a separate political entity as it is a region where terrain and climate are slightly different from that of Turan's Great Desert. The Wilderness supports a larger number of people than does the rest of Turan, and has several reasonably fertile areas where settlements have sprung up. Within the land are many small tribes of nomad herders, a sprinkling of settled villages, and many strange and magical beasts and monsters.

The Tribes of Zin are all related peoples, but few are friendly to each other or outsiders. Most are constantly engaged in feuds with rival tribes. Claims and counterclaims of primacy spark these disagreements, for each tribe considers itself to be the progenitor of all the peoples of Zin (and some claim of the entire world). Those who disagree with such claims are considered heretics and enemies. Few people visit Zin, for it is a volatile and unfriendly region.

The nomadic tribes include Anshar (AN-shar), Ashkenaz (ASH-ke-naz), Elishah (ee-LIE-shah), Danan (DAY-nan), Javan (ja-VAN), Japheth (JA-feth), Kittim (KIT-im), Madai (ma-DA-ee), Magog (ma-GOG), Meshech (ME-shek), Riphath (RYE-fath), Shagar (sha-GAR), Tiras (TIR-es), Togarmah (to-GAR-mah), and Tubal (tu-BAL). The static tribes, and their settlements, are Enoch (EE-nok), Joppa (JOP-a), Shadad (sha-DAHD), Shanidar (SHAN-i-dar), and Ubaid (oo-BA-id). All are swarthy of complexion, dark-haired, and of average height and build. The men are nearly always bearded, and carry long, curved daggers of excellent quality. Turbans, cloaks, and other apparel best suited for desert wear are most popular.

All the Tribes of Zin are rather primitive, having little or no knowledge of metal working. They do make use of metal implements obtained from Tharshesh and Sheba, but they generally cannot repair or create metal objects of any kind. They are skilled in stonecraft, and have mastered other simple crafts and skills, as well. The settlement tribes, for instance, create fine pottery, and have learned to work with the sun-dried brick to construct small buildings of basic *design. All the settlements have developed incipient agricultural* techniques, but though farming provides much of their diet, they are still far from proficient in this area.

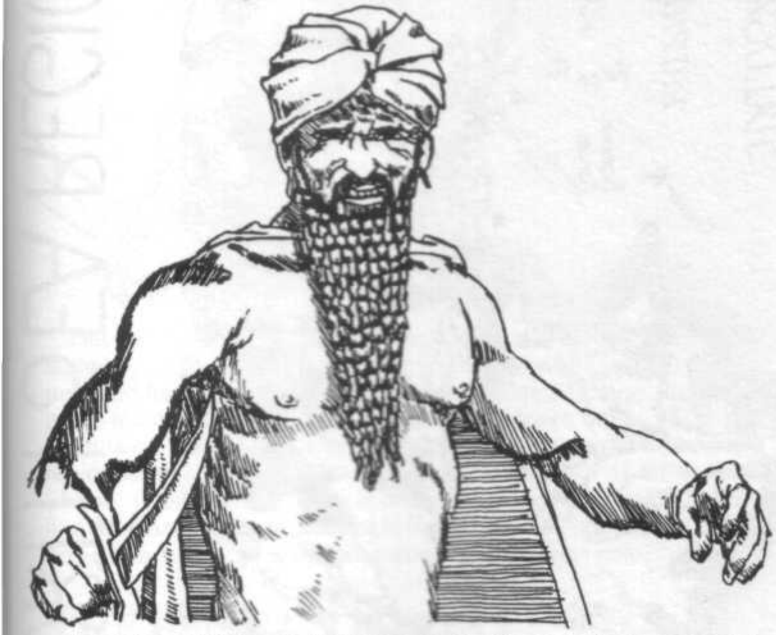
The nomads, on the other hand, have concentrated on the development of weaving, animal husbandry, and basket-making. All these are highly advanced skills among the nomads, and their baskets and cloth are in some demand in foreign lands. Traders from Sheba and Tharshesh sometimes visit Zin in search of these products, despite the hazards of the land. The various tribes come into conflict over religion, as well as the questions of tribal honor mentioned previously. Each tribe has its own religion and its own patron deity, and considers all other worships false or heretical. Mostly the Old Gods continue to hold sway, though several other religions have gained tribal followings.

The Zin are a superstitious people, inclined to view magic as supernatural, and hence as the power of the Gods. Tribal wizards usually function as priests and wise men, and a wizard of sufficient power could conceivably live as a "god" among the Zin. Likewise, great warrior-heroes are idolized by the Zin, but only if they are born to or adopted by the tribe in question. This illustrates the one constant fact about the Tribes of Zin and Turan: none can agree on anything but the fact that they are never in agreement.

The Tribes of Zin

Anshar, Ashkenaz, Elishah, Danan, Javan, Japheth, Kittim, Madai, Magog, Meshech, Riphath, Shagar, Tiras, Togarmah, and Tubal: these are the nomadic Tribes of Zin. None of these tribes is very large (200 — 800 individuals is the norm), and increase only slowly due to fights, raids, and feuds.

All the tribes are herdsmen first and foremost. Hunting, gathering, and raids against or trade with the settlement communities supplement the cattle and goats that are the core of the tribal economy. For the most part, the tribes are virtually identical, save for minor differences of religion or size. A few individual tribes of special note are discussed below; those which are not mentioned can be assumed to have little in the way of unusual fesatures about them.

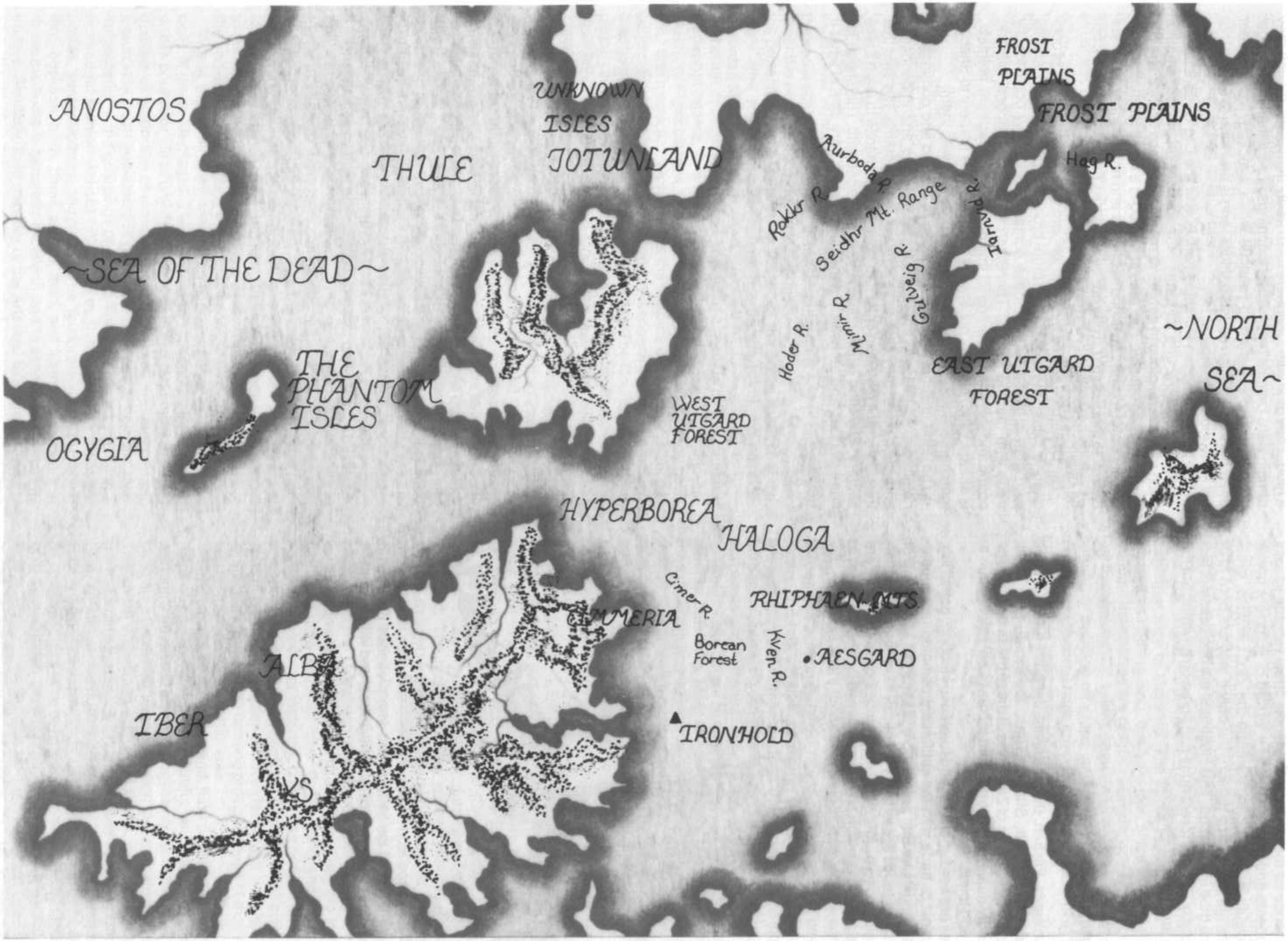


The Tribe of Elishah is led by a mystic who preaches peace and non-violence. It is the most peaceful of the tribes, and will never start a feud. They deal with foreigners more freely than most, though they remain wary. Despite the mystic's teachings, the Elishan never forget a grudge, and are swift to retaliate when attacked. Their leader attempts to avoid such counterattacks, and is unwilling to accept that his tribe undertakes them.

The tribe of Shagan worships Ash, one of the Old Gods, and is a wizardly tribe. Any and all forms of magic are respected, whether such magic is religious in nature, or merely the result of skill. The cult and reinforced shields. The Tribe of Magog is a fanatical shamanistic society worshipping Og. Blood sacrifices and ritual cannabalism are central to this worship. They are as warlike as the Tribe of Danan, but for religious reasons.

The Dananites are led by a warrior-hero who has ambitions of conquering Yalak. The tribe is even more prone to fight any who cross its path than is usually true of these nomad tribes. They occasionally trade with merchants from Tharshesh for metal weapons, offering opium and slaves in exchange for iron broadswords, spears, helmets, is shamanistic, but was not always so. Shagan is friendly to Sheban merchants, doing a frequent but small business with them.

The Tribe of Tubal is warlike, seeking to expand and dominate its neighbors. To this end they seek metal weapons and implements, and, even more, they seek the secrets of metalworking. It is said that they would sell their own chief into slavery for a chance to learn these secrets. The tribe is poor, and, though it trades with Tharshesh for iron weapons and utensils, it generally receives very little of what it wants.


ANOSTOS
UNKNOWN ISLES
FROST PLAINS
FROST PLAINS
THULE
JOTUNLAND
Aurboda R.
Hag R.
Rokkr R.
Seidhr Mt. Range
Iarnvid R.
~SEA OF THE DEAD~
Gulveig R.
Mimir R.
Hoder R.
~NORTH SEA~
THE PHANTOM ISLES
EAST UTGARD FOREST
WEST UTGARD FOREST
OGYGIA
HYPERBOREA
HALOGA
Cimer R.
RHIPHAEN MTS
CIMMERIA
Borean Forest
Kven R.
AESGARD
ALBA
IBER
IRONHOLD
VS
SCALE: 0 830
1 inch = 830 Miles
• = Settlement, Village
▲ = City
— = Road
··· = Trail, Caravan Route

NORTH SEA REGION

HYPERBOREA (hy-per-BORE-ee-a)

Hyperborea is a cold and windswept isle situated between Mediterranea and Jotunland. It is a land of rugged mountain ranges, rolling hills, and deep forest lands teeming with wild life: red fox, moose, red deer, wild boar, brown bear, and lynx to name but a few.

Here the climate is harsh, save for a brief period in late spring and summer when the air is less chill. At such times the two Hyperborean Rivers (the Kven and the Cimer) flow swiftly to the sea, swelled with melting ice and snow from the mountains. During the rest of the year, the rivers are usually covered with a thick sheet of ice, and can be traversed on foot or by sled.

Once home only to the brutish Rock Trolls, Hyperborea is now populated by two human tribes, the Cimmerians and the Vanir. Dwarves, migrated from Mediterranea during the bygone First Age, also dwell here, making their home beneath the vastness of the Rhiphaen Mountains. As certain parts of Hyperborea are rich in amber, this region is not unknown to traders. Many come from as far away as Sheba, Tartessos, and Turan in order to obtain this valuable, crystaline substance. Though subject to fluctuations in price (due to supply and demand) amber is seldom valued any less than gold.

THE BOREAN FOREST

The Borean Forest (named after Boreas, the North Wind) lies to the south of the Rhiphaen Mountains, and stretches along the southern coast of Hyperborea. It is a dense and tangled woodland, difficult to traverse except along the main trails worn into the earth by the region's wild boar population. Like most of Hyperborea, the terrain is rugged and hilly.

The Borean Forest is also a dangerous place. Once connected to Mediterranea and Jambu by land bridges (since submerged beneath the sea after the Great Cataclysm), the area is home to a variety of frightening creatures.Firedrakes lurk in caves dug into the hillsides, and werecreatures and ogres haunt the woods. Cimmerian hunters, who sometimes range as far south as the edge of the Borean Forest, claim that a fierce tribe of goblins lives here, and that arcitenus (huge, two-headed centaurs) hunt along the trails. Others depict the area as being populated by wyverns, ouranabad (winged hydra), and even great dragons.

Despite the dangers inherent in traveling through this region, certain traders and adventurous individuals are known to come here, drawn by the lure of amber. This precious, golden substance is said to be most readily found in certain streams and ponds throughout the forest, and in some of the lower-lying regions as well. Though large finds are said to be uncommon, many who have prospected in this region claim that a day's work will often yield 2 to 12 pieces of amber (1 to 2 inches in diameter), each worth its weight in gold. Entrepeneurs are advised, however, to exercise caution in these parts, for it is not only men who appreciate the beauty and value of this golden substance.

CIMMERIA

Cimmeria is a hilly region which extends from the western coast of Hyperborea inland to the Rhiphaen Mountain Range. It is primarily forest land, though in the spring the lower-lying regions usually become flooded, creating marsh-like conditions.

The human tribes who dwell here, known collectively as the Cimmerians, are a rugged, dark haired people. They know little of agriculture, but are skilled hunters and trappers. Like some of the northern Mediterraneans (from whom it is believed they are descended), the Cimmerians have domesticated both the wild dog and the goat.

The Cimmerians generally live in small communal bands of 10 to 40 individuals. Their villages are simple, each family having a single hut constructed of wood and roofed with green hides or thatch. Most often, the village will be enclosed in a stockade-type fence made of heavy, wooden posts. Some will also have goat pens and sheds for the drying and curing of hides.

Though they are a fairly primitive folk, the Cimmerians know how to work iron, which they use for tools, axe-heads, arrow-heads, and swords. Some say that they learned this skill from the dwarves of the Rhiphaen Mountains, with whom the Cimmerians sometimes trade. As their swords are generally of good to excellent quality, there may well be some truth to this claim.

For the most part, the Cimmerians are a peaceful people who rarely fight amongst themselves. They have no love for the haughty Vanir, however, and will band together to defend against their raiding parties. A particularly savage or damaging attack will sometimes motivate a large band of Cimmerians to launch a counterstrike against a Vanir settlement. As Cimmerian warriors are often somewhat poorly equipped (leather or furs, shields, bows, swords, or axes) such attacks usually take the form of ambushes, night raids, and similar covert actions. In this type of fighting, the forest-bred Cimmerians generally excel.

Not an especially religious folk, the Cimmerians revere Atta, whom they believe is too preoccupied to listen to mere mortals. Many tribes have a shaman or druidic Healer, but these individuals hold no great power or influence over their people; in fact, most Cimmerians are skeptical (or even fearful) of anything that smacks of magic.

Unlike the Vanir, the Cimmerians are independent by nature, and have no official chieftains or leaders. In times of trouble, a skillful warrior will usually provide leadership, but otherwise each band governs itself by council.

HALOGA

Haloga is a rich land of sloping hills, deep vales, and snowy peaks. Situated to the north of the Rhiphaen Mountains, this region is notable for its rocky coastland and twisting fjords, and is home of the seafaring Vanir peoples.

The Vanir are a fair-skinned race, most having blond or reddish hair. Both the men and women wear their hair long, usually done up in a single braid bound with strips of leather. All the adult males wear beards, of which they, like the dwarves, are quite proud; in fact, a clean-shaven face is deemed a mark of femininity (or at best immaturity) by these folk.

The Vanir live almost exclusively along the northern coasts, in clans of 100 to 600 individuals led by a single warrior chief. Each settlement is surrounded by a wall of earth and stone, and is more or less square or rectangular in layout. Within the walls each family has its own lodge, built of stone, wood and thatch

A communal lodge, often over one hundred feet in length, functions as a meeting place for the clan's male warriors. Located some distance from the lodges are pens for the clan's goats and oxen, communally-run forges, smokehouses, and sheds for the drying of lumber and the curing of hides. Though the Vanir are primarily hunter-gatherers, they cultivate certain crops, such as hops, barley, and millet. The females tend the clan's fields, which are almost always located outside of the settlement walls.

The Vanir are accomplished shipbuilders and skilled seamen. Their vessels — modelled after the Jotun's dragon ships — are swift and sturdy, and can hold as many as 100 men. A clan will generally have from 1 to 3 such ships, each outfitted with both oars and sail. The larger ships will sometimes be outfitted with a light catapult, which may be used to hurl flaming missiles or stones.

An aggressive and warlike people, the Vanir revel in battle. They often set sail in their warships in order to raid the coastal villages of Cimmeria, northern Mediterranea, and even Iber and Alba. Such raids are usually swift and savage in nature; the Vanir often put villages to the torch, slay all male occupants, and carry off the women (whom they use as slaves).

Despite the tales told by sailors from the southern regions, the Vanir rarely engage in piracy. They will, however, attack Jotun or Fomorian vessels on sight, and have long enjoyed success against the larger ships of these antagonists. As Corsair vessels seldom venture into the northern waters, the Vanir are inclined to ignore such ships on the rare occasions that they do encounter them.

The armament of a typical Vanir warrior consists of a leather or hide vest (sometimes studded with iron rings or bosses), an iron-bound, wooden shield, and an iron helm (usually decorated with horns or "wings" of bronze or iron). Throwing axes and spears are most often favored, though some individuals disdain the use of a shield in favor of such two-handed weapons as the battle axe, war hammer, or pole axe. The Vanir are also known to employ the long bow, but this is not normally a popular weapon amongst these folk, who tend to prefer fighting at close range.

Though the Vanir do not often engage in trade with other peoples, some of the southernmost settlements are known to deal in amber. This hard, gleaming resin is found in abundance along the coasts of Haloga and in the estuaries of the rivers Kven and Cimer. Many of the larger clans employ slaves to dredge these waters for amber, which is used as a type of currency amongst the Vanir, and as fine ornamentation; it is sometimes melted down and cast into rings, necklaces, and pendants. The biggest dealer in amber is Aesgard, a large (population 2000 +) settlement on the southeastern coast. Ships from such distant lands as Sheba, Tharshesh and Ku are known to come here in order to obtain this precious substance, which in some places is worth its weight (or more) in gold.

Despite their warlike nature, the Vanir rarely engage in raids against neighboring settlements. In fact, warrior chiefs from rival clans sometimes meet in order to discuss subjects of mutual interest: trade, boundary disputes, upcoming raids, etc. As the Vanir hate the Rock Trolls, the clans will sometimes band together to repulse troll war-parties. The Dwarves and Vanir, however, do not get along well at all. Both covet the ore-rich expanses of the southern Rhiphaens, and skirmishes between the two races are not uncommon. The Vanir also have a long-standing dislike of the Cimmerian peoples, whom they deem their inferiors in all respects. For this reason, Cimmerian slaves are always in demand, and raids against Cimmerian villages are common.

The Vanir are not overtly religious, but nevertheless pay homage to the true elementals of wind and sea. Their "priests" are druids, who erect dolmens (large stone monuments) to the most powerful of these demi-gods and conduct certain, seasonal rituals.

THE RHIPHAEN MOUNTAINS

(RIF-ee-en)

The Rhiphaen Mountain Range runs along the southern coast of Hyperborea, and extends into the central interior, forming a natural boundary line between Cimmeria and Haloga. Long a source of contention among the Dwarves, Rock Trolls, and (most recently) the Vanir, the Rhiphaens are rich in iron, tin, copper, and gold ore.

At the lower altitudes, the Rhiphaens are covered with trees and shrubs; beyond the tree line only mosses and bracken grow. Both the southern and central ranges are home to a number of strange and dangerous creatures, especially Hippogriffs, which are quite common in these areas. Even so, the two most dominant species in this region dwell not amidst the wooded foothills or the rocky slopes, but beneath the mountains themselves.

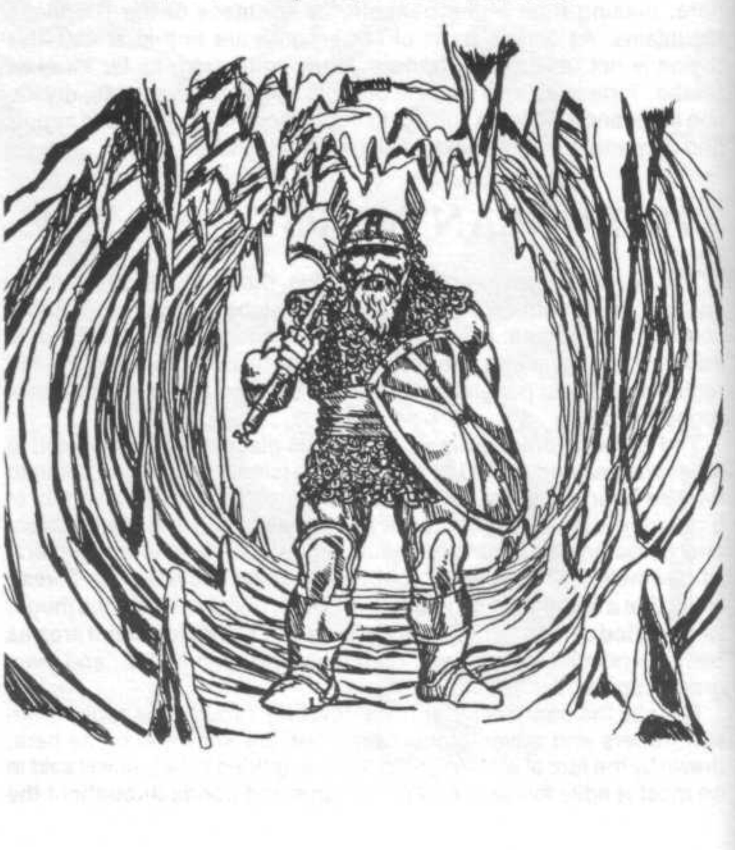
The Dwarves

With the exception of the Isle of Punt, the Rhiphaen Mountains are perhaps the last great refuge of the race of dwarves. Here they are found in great numbers, most dwelling in underground complexes located some 100 to 800 feet below the surface, with others being found at even greater depths.

The Rhiphaen Mountain dwarves have traditionally been renowned as the best miners, metal smiths, and gemologists in the known world. Their arms and armor are exquisitely crafted, as are the more decorative pieces worn by their womenfolk. Craftsmen from far-off lands have long sought to duplicate the quality of dwarven goods, but have seldom met with success.

Since settling in the Rhiphaen Mountains some centuries ago, the dwarves have constantly been at war with the region's original inhabitants, the rock trolls. Though physically outmatched (and sometimes outnumbered) by the brutish trolls, the dwarven army has repeatedly beaten back the advances of their dull-witted foes. As a result, the rock trolls have been driven ever further underground, and have not attempted a major assault in years. The dwarves view this condition as temporary, however, and maintain a vigilant posture.

The underground civilization of the dwarves is well organized. The main center of activity, known as: *Ironhold*, is a fortress of impressive dimensions. Here the dwarven king lives, along with his retinue and the bulk of the dwarven army. A complex but orderly system of tunnels and passageways emanates from Ironhold, connecting the fortress with numerous, smaller outposts, mines and caverns.



Platoons of 10 to 20 warriors (in chainmail, with shields, axes or warhammers) patrol the main corridors at regular intervals, returning to their assigned outpost after completing their rounds. Smaller armed platoons are also assigned to the mines, where they keep watch for troll raiding bands. These groups are usually relieved at eight-hour intervals, coinciding with the shifts of the work crews.

Each mining operation will employ from 10 to 200 workers, with one foreman per every 20 laborers. All crews work eight-hour shifts, with breaks for meals, rest, and (occasionally) a good, strong drink. The raw ore is transported in wagons to the immense Ironhold facility. Ore from the most distant dwarven outposts may take as long as 2 to 8 weeks to reach Ironhold, traveling underground the entire way. Gems packed in iron strongboxes are also transported in this fashion.

Arriving at Ironhold, the wagons are unloaded (afterwhich they head back to the outposts, carrying food and supplies on the return trip). The ore is smelted down and the ingots are then brought to the dwarven smiths, who forge and shape them into tools, weapons, armor, and all manner of useful devices and implements. The finest gemstones are stored in heavily guarded vaults, along with any surplus gold or silver ingots.

Though the dwarves are by nature a reclusive folk, they occasionally have dealings with other peoples. As they must periodically come to the surface in order to obtain food, wood, and other supplies, they will sometimes trade with certain of the neighboring Cimmerian Tribes, exchanging iron and tin ingots for furs, hides, and other goods. On rare occasions, the dwarves will trade with merchants from the Mediterranean countries, but only if their own supplies of liquor and ale are running low (the dwarves brew their own alcoholic beverages in huge, wooden casks, kept below ground). They will not trade with the Vanir whom they dislike in the extreme. Conversely, they will always offer their hospitality to any Aesir (whom they regard as trusted friends and allies), and dwarves from other regions.

The Rhiphaen Mountain dwarves do not have a patron deity per se, but instead revere several of the True Earth Elementals. The dwarves dedicate certain of the more beautiful underground caverns and grottos as shrines to these demi-gods, and often go to such places in order to meditate and give thanks.

The Rock Trolls

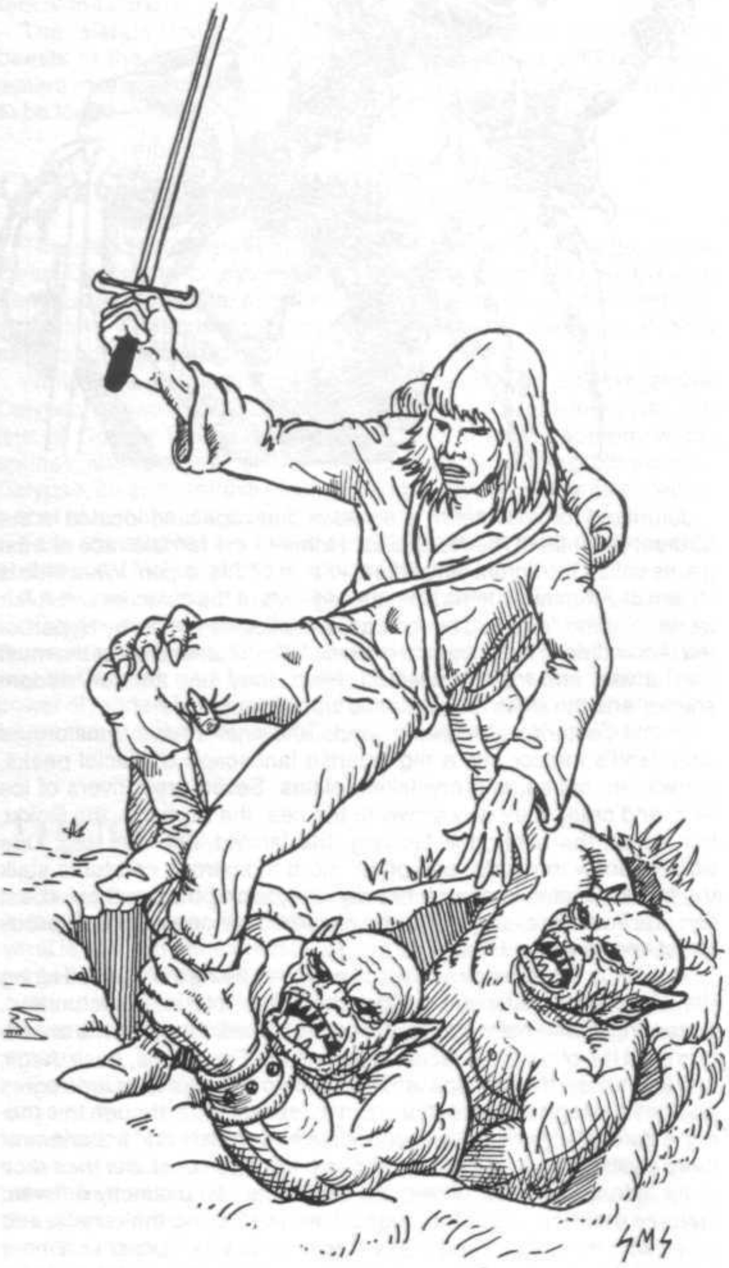
The Rock Trolls are a dark and ancient race believed to be descended from the goblin and giant races of Mediterranea and the northlands. A vile and brutish folk, the trolls have long battled with their hated rivals, the dwarves, for possession of the Rhiphaen Mountains. In recent years the fortunes of war have not favored the dark folk, and they have been forced to withdraw deeper and deeper into the depths of the mountains.

Despite their setbacks, the trolls are known to still covet the rich veins of ore which run like still rivers through the upper levels of the mountains. Though their armies have long been inactive, small bands of trolls continue to harass dwarven mining operations; slaying work crews, causing cave-ins, and undermining dwarven installations with crisscrossing networks of tunnels. To aid them in such endeavors the rock trolls sometimes employ their larger cousins, the mountain trolls, or the bestial, sightless monsters known as cave trolls.

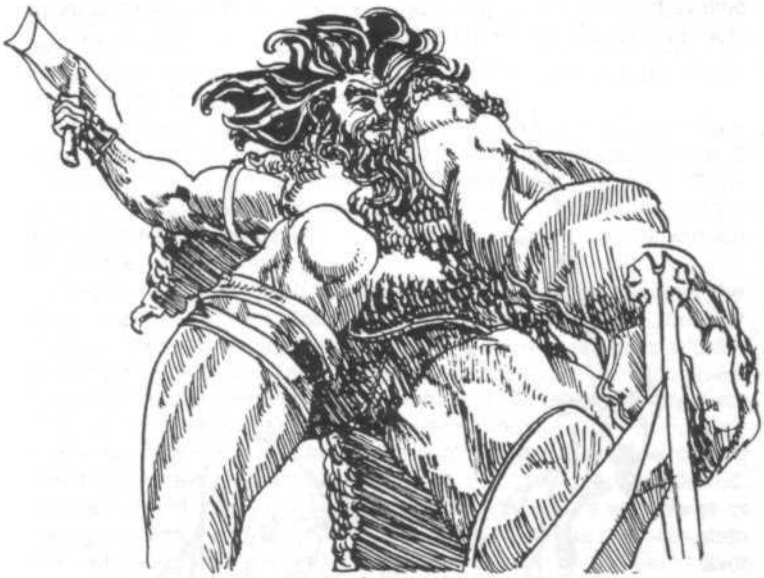
While much of the trolls' culture remains a mystery, rumors and legends abound. For instance, it is said that the rock trolls have a single king, who rules from deep within the bowels of the earth. He is supposedly huge and powerful, and sits on a throne carved from a single block of obsidian. His palace is located in a gigantic cavern which lies at the nexus of a vast network of underground passageways, some leading beneath the ocean floor and exiting in faraway lands.

Amongst the lower levels of the palace are other caverns, some filled with stolen treasures, some housing the giant forges used to smelt metals for the trolls' siege engines. Armies of wretched slave laborers toil in the labyrinthine mines found at these depths, driven mercilessly by their troll masters.

As no human or dwarf has ever seen the palace of the troll king, such stories may be greatly exaggerated, if they are true at all. The dwarves, however, have long held such tales to be authentic, and believe that the troll king will one day send forth his minions in an attempt to recapture the upper levels.



JOTUNLAND



Jotunland (or *Jotunheim*) is a wild and savage land located in the furthest reaches of the North Sea. Home of the terrible race of frost giants called the Jotun, very little is known of this region. What little is known of Jotunland stems from the legends of the dwarves and Aesir races, and the tales told by the barbaric peoples of nearby Hyperborea. According to the accounts of these folk, Jotunland is, for the most part, a vast and frigid wasteland. Here, they say, the sun seldom shines, and the skies are darkened with stormclouds.

Untold centuries of freezing winds and snows have transformed Jotunland's interior into a nightmarish landscape of glacial peaks, convoluted spires, and crystalline plains. Seven great rivers of ice twist and creak their way slowly to the sea: the Aurboda, the Rokkr, the Hoder, the Mimir, the Gulveig, the Iarnvid, and the Hag. Dire wolves, snow leopards, and other, more monstrous creatures stalk the frozen wastes in search of prey. Only along the southern coast can one find some refuge from the elements, amongst the coniferous forest known as the Utgard.

The Jotun are a fierce and warlike race of beings who dwell along the southern coasts and amidst the bleak interior of Jotunland. According to dwarven legend, the blue-skinned Jotun are the ancestors of all the other giant races, including the Fomorians, Aesir, Aegir, and (some say) the Cyclopses. The Vanir go so far as to include ogres and trolls among the list of the Jotun's descendants, though this theory is generally given little credence by the scholars and historians of more civilised lands. As for themselves, the Jotun consider their race to be akin to the gods. There are said to be two distinctly different cultures amongst the Jotun: those who dwell along the coasts, and those who roam the inland areas. The coastal tribes possess a more advanced civilization, and are skilled in rudimentary metal working, and the building of great castles and fortifications (many constructed solely of immense blocks of ice). The art of shipbuilding they know well, and they are known to construct great wooden vessels built in the shape of dragons (the Vanir of Hyperboria have long imitated the Jotun with respect to the style of their own longships).

For centuries these Jotun tribes have ranged the North Sea in *search of plunder, from the coasts of Hyperboria to the northernmost* shores of Mediterranea, Alba, Iber and even Jambu. In days past, their raiding vessels were seen as far west as Gava and Anostos, but bitter clashes with both the Fomorians and the Aesir have since discouraged Jotun excursions into these territories.

Though the coastal Jotun tribes have, from time to time, shown an interest in acquiring other territories, they do not possess the organization necessary for such complex military endeavors. Neither can the Jotun tolerate any but the most frigid climes except for short periods of time. Despite such limitations, many of the coastal Jotun have amassed considerable fortunes by raiding their northern neighbors. Some of the greater war chieftains are said to live much in the manner of kings, surrounded by stolen riches and attended to by slaves of many different races.

The Jotun who dwell amidst the bleak expanses of the interior regions are, on the other hand, far more bestial in nature. Unlike their more civilised brothers, these Jotun know nothing of ships, fortifications, or metal working. Instead, they live in caves, dress in rude furs, and use weapons fashioned from bone, rock, and animal sinew. Often they keep wolves or bears as pets.

As fire is unknown to these Jotun, they eat only the raw flesh of such creatures as they can kill. Though the Dwarves and Aesir claim that *these giants often resort to cannibalism when food is scarce, there is* no evidence to support such lurid tales. Even so, the Jotun who populate the inland areas are deemed to be both exceptionally cruel and utterly fearless in battle.

THE UTGARD FOREST

The Utgard forest stretches along much of the southernmost coast of Jotunland. It is the only known woodland area in Jotunland, and as such is the sole source of timber for the giant raiding vessels of the coastal Jotun tribes.

Unlike the depleted fells of Anostos, the Utgard is reputedly a thriving forestland. Within its great, snowy expanses can be found a variety of conifers,from low-lying Juniper to towering Firs. The needle-likefoliage of Utgard's trees and shrubs is said to be white, rather than green,in color; the dwarves claim that this anomaly is due to the lack of sunlight in this land of slate-grey skies.

Like the interior regions, the Utgard forest is home to such predators as dire wolves, snow leopards, and polar bears. Less dangerous creatures, such as snow hare, sable, reindeer and musk-ox, are also said to reside here. Along the coastal areas, fur seals and walruses have often been spotted, though they are probably less common in the south than in the northern areas.

Vanir and Aesir warriors who have escaped from Jotun slave crews say that at least two tribes of Nethermen also live in this area. Neither, they claim, are friendly to the Jotun, who hunt them for food. At least one of these tribes has, on occasion, offered aid to escaped captives of the Jotun. Even if such stories are to be believed, it is quite certain that the Utgard forest is not a place to be ventured into with impunity.

THE SEIDHR MOUNTAINS

The icy peaks of the Seidhr mountain range extend throughout the interior of Jotunland, and towards both the northern and southern areas. Whipped by frigid winds and driving snows, the area is most inhospitable, and passage through the mountains is believed to be impossible. Nevertheless, the howling of wolves and the occasional, inhuman shrieks of the Yeti give testimony to the fact that this is hardly an uninhabited region.

The coastal Jotun tribes believe that the mountains are magical in nature (hence the name "Seidhr", which, roughly translated, means "magic"), and so come here to mine for the metals used in their weapons and armor. Whenever possible, slaves are used to augment these mining expeditions, which are said to involve the excavation of immense quantities of ice and snow. As far as is known, the raw ore (often still imbedded in chunks of ice) is transported down one of the frozen rivers on great wooden "sleds", possibly equipped with single-masted sails.

The Jotun claim that ore derived from the Seidhrs is magical in nature, and this may be true; though generally somewhat crude in terms of workmanship, Jotun weapons and armor are notable for their extreme durability. Upon examination by qualified individuals, captured Jotun weaponry has often (65%) proved to emanate a faint magical dweomer, with certain pieces exhibiting even more profound magical properties.

THE FROST PLAINS

Beyond the Seidhr mountain range, stretching almost to the northern coasts of Jotunland, lies the region known as the Frost Plains. It is an utterly flat expanse of hard-packed snow, unbroken save for the appearance of an occasional icy ridge or chasm. The Jotun call this place the Fylgjir ("ghost") Plains, and will, under no circumstances, ever set foot in this part of Jotunheim. According to the Jotun, this area is haunted by spirits, a claim borne out, at least in part, by the dwarven belief that the plains were once an ancient burial ground of some sort. If true, it is conceivable that artifacts dating back to the fabled First Age may lie hidden beneath the snow.

If the tales of the sea-faring Vanir are to be believed, however, the Frost Plains may conceal more than ancient relics. Here, it is said, are found earth-bound demons such as the Mahrkusha (frost demons), the Arzori (wind demons), and the Myrtu (demons of death). Neither do these evil creatures roam the plains without purpose, for they are said to serve the monstrous entity known as *Jormungandr*, who dwells deep beneath the surface of the icy plains.

The exact nature of Jormungandr is not known. In Vanir legends the beast is alternately described as a gigantic serpent of indeterminate length, an ancient great dragon, a wizard transformed by magic into a hideous demon, and even an ice golem. If the creature exists at all, it may well be immortal (as some claim), with power approaching that of a demi-god's.

THE NORTH SEA

The icy boundaries of the North Sea include Anostos in the north, Jambu to the south, Jotunland and Zemlazelan to the west and southwest, respectively, while the Erian Ocean lies to the east. Actually, the North Sea and the Erian Ocean are a single body of water, but are distinguished geographically by their relationship to specific land areas. The Erian Ocean is held to be that portion of this body of water which lies north of Eria, while the North Sea is the western side of the same ocean, north of Jambu.

It is a cold mass of ice and water, chilled by an arctic current that passes through the Erian Ocean, the North Sea, and the Sea of the Dead to circumnavigate the globe. This current is strong, and carries icebergs on a relentless westward course. Icy death frequently finds those who sail these merciless waters towards Jotunland and Anostos.

AURORA (uh-ROR-a)

This isle is the only landmass in the North Erian Ocean known to have even a tenuous basis in accepted fact. Its existence is corroborated by a single reference in an ancient tome describing the many voyages of First Age Atlantean explorers and conquerors.

Aurora is described as an island surrounded by floating ice mountains. The sky above the region is said to radiate colors of fabulous hue, especially during the winter and summer solstices. Little else is known of this place, though certain legends claim it to be inhabited by a rare species of ice nymph.

THE SEA OF THE DEAD

Far to the north of Atlantis lies the Sea of the Dead, a cold, dark sea loosely bounded by Anostos, Jotunland, Hyperborea, Mediterranea, and Atlantis itself. It is a strange and mysterious sea, known for its sea-dragons and great icebergs, summers of unending day and winters of the darkest night.

The islands that dot the sea range from sinister realms of evil beasts to the lovely garden isle of Ogygia. Those who sail these waters may expect to find adventure, for both wonders and perils are to be found in this region.

OGYGIA (oh-GEE-jee-a)

The island of Ogygia lies in the southern reaches of the Sea of the Dead. Despite its relative proximity to Alba and Iber, few dare to come here due to the sinister reputation which is accorded to the surrounding waters. Consquently, knowledge of Ogygia is limited to the often exaggerated accounts of sailors and adventurers.

While there are many such tales, the most popular is the legend of Calypso, queen of the Nerieds (Sea Nymphs). As the story goes, the Isle of Ogygia is a veritable paradise of lush vegetation, warm springs, and cool grottos. In the most beautiful of these grottos dwells Calypso, an enchantress of surpassing lovliness. She is attended by a host of nymphs, each more lovely than the last.

From the shores they call to passing ships, singing of the beauty and peace which are to be found on Ogygia.

It is said that men of good heart are welcome to stay on the island, for Ogygia is a haven for the weary. Those who would stay for more than a single evening, however, will wish to remain forever; such is the way of Calypso and her subjects, whose charms are beyond the power of mortals to resist. Should a man of evil heart come here, then let him beware the magics of Calypso and the nymphs of Ogygia.

THULE (TU-lay)

Thule is an island in the far north between Anostos and Jotunland in the Sea of Dead. Very little is actually known about this island but what is told and mentioned by sailors and adventurers, and what can be gathered from various legends of the Ska peoples.

Thule is said to be a large island with soil that is totally infertile. The air surrounding the island is a mixture of misty sea water and breatheable air.

Each year at the summer solstice the sun rises. It never sets, but stays in the sky until the winter solstice. During this time Thule is enveloped in pitch darkness for a period of two months.

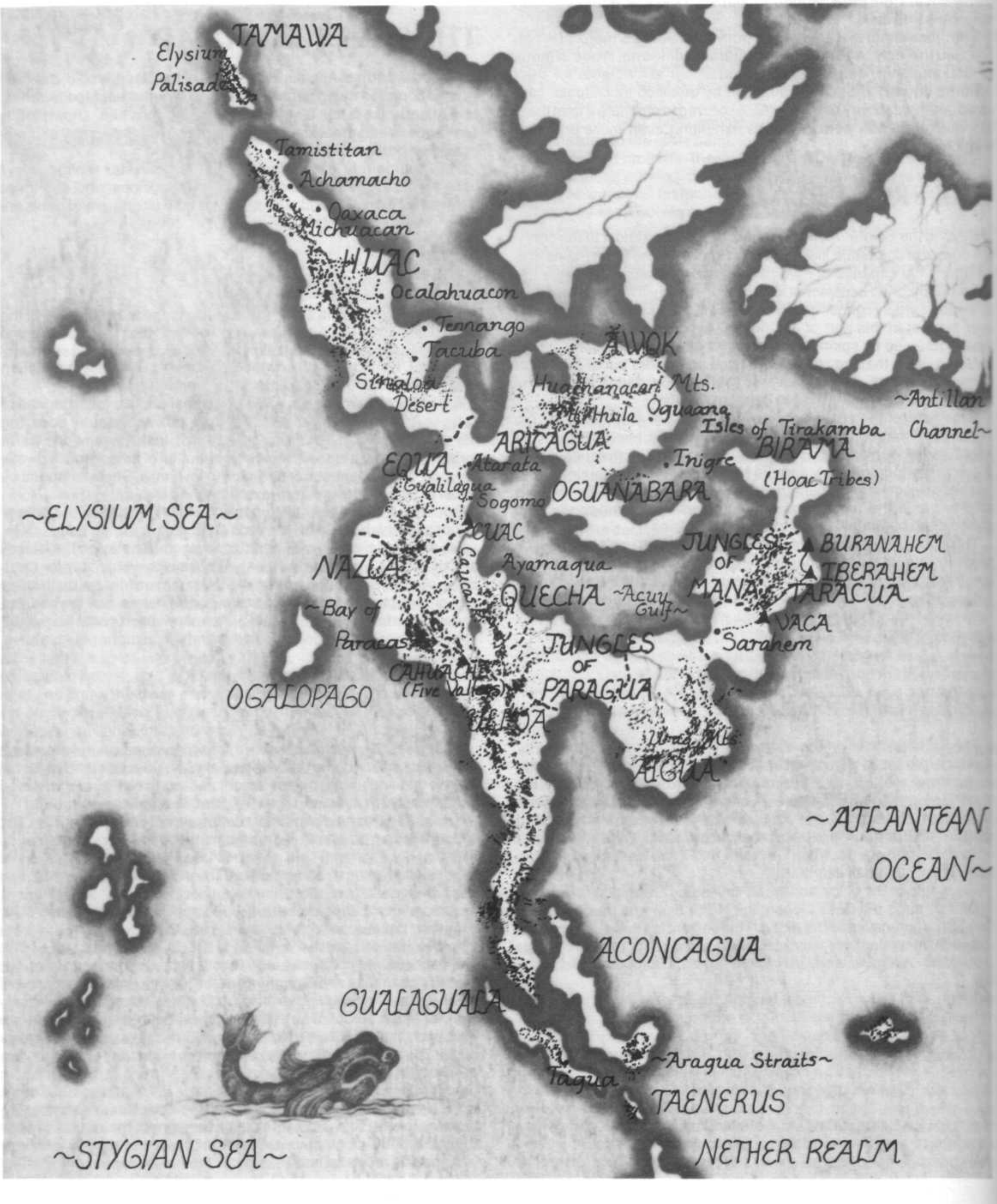
Among the few creatures that are believed to inhabit Thule are a tribe of humans called the *Scritifi* (skri-TEE-fi), who live a savage life in the sparse forests of the island. They wear crude animal skins and feed their babes not with mother's milk, but with the bone marrow of wild beasts. The Scritifi are very primitive and, according to Ska legend, worship demons. They offer human sacrifices by impaling their victims on sharp sticks and then throwing the bodies into a deep crevasse. This crevasse lies at the center of the island and is said to be so deep that it reaches Hell itself.

According to other accounts, Thule is also home to an ancient order of black magicians, who were banished from Atlantis during the bygone Second Age. Some say the ancestors of these exiled magicians continue to practice their dark rituals to this day, and are amongst the most evil spell casters in the known world.

SCALE: 0 1,000
1 inch = 1,000 Miles

TAMOANCHAN

● = Settlement, Village
▲ = City
— = Road
··· = Trail, Caravan Route


TAMAWA
Elysium Palisades
Tamistitan
Achamacho
Oaxaca
Michuacan
HUAC
Ocalahuacon
Tennango
Tacuba
Sinaloa Desert
AWOK
Huachanacari Mts.
Mt. Huila
Oguaana
Isles of Tirakamba
~Antillan Channel~
ARICAGUA
EQUA
Atarata
Inigre
BIRAMA
(Hoac Tribes)
Gualilagua
Sogomo
OGUANABARA
~ELYSIUM SEA~
CUAC
JUNGLES OF MANA
BURANAHEM
IBERAHEM
TARACUA
NAZCA
Cauca
Ayamaqua
QUECHA
~Acuy Gulf~
VACA
Sarahem
~Bay of Paracas
JUNGLES OF PARAGUA
CAHUACHI (Five Valleys)
OGALOPAGO
ULLOA
Uraq Mts.
AIGUA
~ATLANTEAN OCEAN~
ACONCAGUA
GUALAGUALA
~Aragua Straits~
Taigua
TAENERUS
NETHER REALM
~STYGIAN SEA~

TAMOANCHAN (tam-o-an-CHAN)

The rugged, irregular continental landmass known as Tamoanchan is a region as varied in terrain and climate as it is in population and culture. Tamoanchan contains many wild and inaccessible areas, but is also the home of several advanced lowland cultures. Every variation is present, and in the wilds of this continent, the adventurer can never tell if the next encounter will be with a wildman or a scholar, a cannibal headhunter or a kindly mystic.

The civilizations of Tamoanchan range from primitive cultures of wild tribesmen to sophisticated, neo-Atlantean regimes as advanced as any in the world. From the Nazcan mountain realms to the jungles of Oguanabara, Tamoanchan's inhabitants present a multitude of interesting and unusual cultural patterns, many of them unique to the strange, often isolated reaches of this continent.

Geographers divide the straggling continent of Tamoanchan into four general regions. Each is distinct in the basics of terrain, flora and fauna, climate, and overall suitability for (and hence, support of) human settlement.

The Northern District is subtropical, and consists of rugged deserts and mountains inland. The coasts, however, are fertile and pleasant. This district is actually closer to much of Eria than it is to the bulk of Tamoanchan, at least in terms of climate, for the unusual shape of the continents ends the northern district out in a long, trailing spur that runs far from the tropics of "mainland" Tamoanchan.

The Central District is a region of equatorial highlands, with rugged mountains clad in thick tropical jungles below, rising into peaks that are often snowcapped and icy. The coastal regions, and certain high mountain areas, are conductive to settlement, but other areas are grim and impenetrable. The mountains of the Central District extend southward, into the Southern District. This region of the continent shares the rugged mountain terrain of the Central District, but lacks the tropical climate of the central lowlands. As a result, it is a colder, grimmer region, less well-populated or hospitable than other parts of the continent.

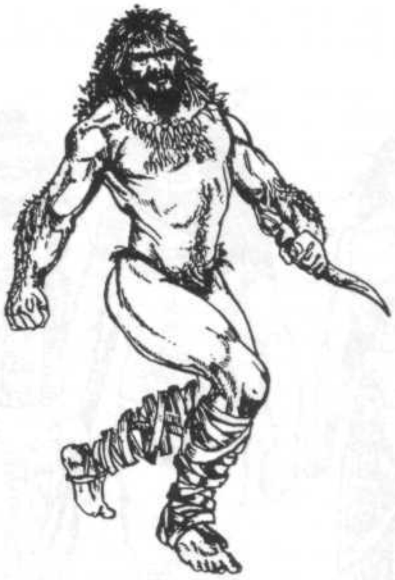
The Eastern District is divided into two separate peninsulas which extend around a great, almost landlocked arm of the ocean. In this region of low-lying, tropical land, jungles dominate the landscape. However, the district supports some fairly sophisticated cultures, thanks to the influence of Antilla and Atlantis to the west.

Tamoanchan supports a wide variety of unusual species of plant and animal life, much of it poorly known, due to the difficulty of gaining access to the country. Many forms of life found in Tamoanchan are unknown in any other part of the world. Of particular note are any of several species of animal-men, beasts which are capable of assuming human form. These races have been slowly drawing closer to extinction, though at least one branch has actually developed a significant culture of its own. The bulk of mineral resources in Tamoanchan are concentrated in the Central District, where gold, silver, copper and many other precious metals are mined by the advanced cultures centered in this area. Most other regions are lacking in major mineral deposits, though it is possible that many worthwhile finds have merely not been discovered due to rough terrain or scattered population. For most of the continent, the primary resources are animals, plants, and other non-mineral finds.

Tamoanchan's settlement can best be described as "uneven." Most areas support comparatively small, scattered populations. Both the North and South Districts are sparsely populated, particularly the South. The jungles of the east, and the mountain regions of the center, support a few small, heavily populated areas surrounded by vast, trackless, uninhabited areas of jungle wilderness.

As to non-humans: elves, dwarves, and similar groups are almost unknown. Goblins, gremlins, and a variety of other such groups can be found, particularly in the Central and East Districts. Demons, too, find homes in these dangerous regions. The South is home to a neanderthaloid species of men, a vanishing breed now restricted to a few grim and inhospitable lands. In the East District, certain regions are home to animal-men, some quite bestial, but a few intelligent and sophisticated enough to have created their own culture.

ACONCAGUA (ak-on-KA-gwa)



Though Aconcagua is actually an island separate and apart from the Tamoanchan continent, it is considered to be a part of the South District of that sprawling landmass. Like the rest of the South District, Aconcagua is rugged and desolate by the standards of those used to the plenty of lands such as Atlantis or Hesperia. But though the island's climate and terrain are harsh, they do support life. The primitive inhabitants of Aconcagua eke out a simple life here, and may well have benefited from the fact that their barren land holds no great attraction for more ambitious and covetous people.

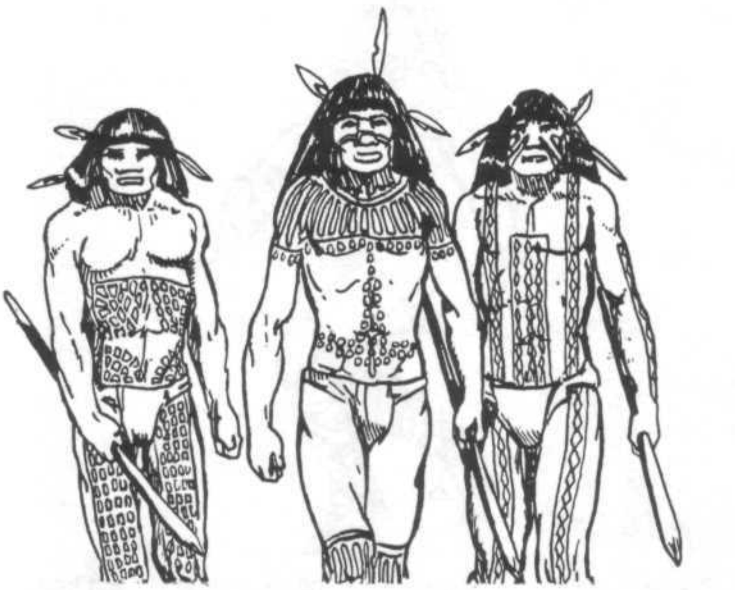
The wild life of Aconcagua is not numerous, but there are still a wide variety of animals present to support the hunters who make up the island's small, semi-nomadic population. Some of the most notable species on the island include a numerous and varied assortment of rodents, deer, *miohippus* herds (a small, almost extinct horselike species), birds, frogs, fish, large sloths, camelids, rheas, and, in the waters off the coast of the island, several types of whales. Indigenous plant life provides roots, herbs, and a few nuts and berries to supplement the diet of the natives. The people of Aconcagua (and the neighboring island of Gualaguala) are not typical humans; they are of a variant species of Neanderthaloids. Although the sophisticated, civilized people of Atlantis and other such lands claim them to be dumb brutes, little better than animals, these sub-men are in fact as intelligent as any human species. They are a brown-skinned race, of average height and generally muscular physiques.

Once, eons ago, the Neanderthaloids were widespread, having settled lands all around the globe. Now they have dwindled, and Aconcagua and Gualaguala are among the last remaining regions they can still claim as their own. Their decline was the result of many factors. They tend to be an unaggressive race, in harmony with nature and hence against the growth of advanced civilization, cities, and other marks of progress. Other breeds of men displaced them easily, and carried on genocidal wars to wipe their primitive tribes off the face of the earth.

But here in Aconcagua, they still live the simple life of their ancestors. They are primitive hunters, using stone axes, stone-tipped spears, or bolas to hunt. They make no pottery, and only the most basic utensils or tools. No written language is used, nor have they developed metalworking, but they utilize bones to make needles, knives, even simple musical instruments. Cured hides and furs give them clothes and shelter, plus various other useful items. They are clever and talented in making such things, and their rock-wall paintings (a part of the religious practices of their Shamanistic, worship of the Old Gods) are fascinating to behold.

Known as the Chono (SHO-no) among the inhabitants of Tamoanchan, these tribesmen are especially noted for the power of their shamans.

AIGUA (Eye-gwa)



Aigua is a jungle-covered land of the East District. It is bordered to the south by the Atlantean Ocean, and to the North by the Acuan Gulf. Paragua lies to the west, and Taracua to the east. Few humans have ever lived in, or even, visited Aigua for as long as any scholar can determine. It is a land of fierce creatures and impenetrable rain forest, with only a single remote, isolated inhabited territory.

The fauna of Aigua is rich and varied. Several of the smaller species of dinosaurs thrive here, as do various mammals now largely extinct elsewhere in the world. The birds of these jungles are perhaps the most colorful and varied of any found in Tamoanchan. Parrots are particularly common, and are often hunted for pets by the Taracuans. In the central high lands of the Urag (ur-AG).

Mountains, where a human tribe known as the Uragua (ur-AG-wa) live, the rhea is common. The tribesmen have domesticated rhea herds, using them as sources of eggs, meat, and ornamental feathers.

The Uragua are an anomaly, living in a single general area of the highlands in caves and sheltered ledges. They use tools of stone, bone, and wood, and make stone axes and maces, wooden clubs, staves, and spears, and bolas and slings. Their spears are actually little better than fire-sharpened staves, and are never used for throwing (though they may be dropped down cliffsides). Metalworking is virtually unknown among the Uragua, save for a rather crude ability to work lead. They make poorly fashioned boxes, dishes, and bowls of the metal. The use of lead has led to a high mortality rate among the tribe, and though they reproduce rapidly, they are slowly dying out.

Uraguan culture has evolved a very strange, but extremely strict, code of conduct regulating male-female roles in everyday life. Only the male can make or use a weapon, or most tools (except cooking utensils), but when not using them, they will not carry them. The female carries these items at all times, ready to give them to the male at a moment's notice. She may never use these objects herself, and should she do so, or lose or break one, she is exiled by the tribe.

On the other hand, only the female can handle food. From the moment a kill is made, only the female can touch the meat, and only a woman can gather fruit or other plantlife. Preparation, cooking, and serving must be done by the woman, and a man who breaks this custom in any way will also be exiled.

The women of the Uragua are also responsible for religious worship. The local cult of Og is shamanistic in nature, and centered on a great stone monolith to Og raised at the highest point of their land. Only female Uragua may become shamans whose duty it is to guard this sacred monument.

The Uragua maintain traditions of having come from another part of Tamoanchan ages ago, fleeing from light-skinned strangers who traveled the seas and fought with metal. In actual fact, they are probably the descendents of Ulloan refugees who chose to flee over land rather than seek the safety of the subterranean world where the other Ulloans fled. The legends do not identify their homeland, nor do they remember the fate of the Ulloans, but they do have traditions of entrances into the world below in their original lands. Another legend of the Woman of Stone and the City of Darkness, might lead scholars to the conclusion that their ancestors were Ulloans. So far, however, very little is known of the Uragua in the outside world.

ARICAGUA (air-i-KA-gwa)

Though considered part of the East District of Tamoanchan, Aricagua is actually a transitional area between the terrains and climates of the Central and East Districts. To the north lies the ocean, part of The Ocaraba Channel, to the south is the Acuan Gulf. Awok lies northeast, and Oguanabara southeast. Due west is a narrow isthmus that connects the Upper Peninsula of the East District to the mainland of Tamoanchan. The region is wild and overgrown with rainforest. Except for a few wandering Choma tribesmen from Awok, no humans live in this region. Makara haunt the northern coast, but the dominant race is the Jaguar People, a fierce race of animal-Men who can change shape from jaguar to human (and back again) at will.

The Jaguar-People live on the lower slopes of the Huachamacari (wok-a-ma-KAR-e) Mountains in the western part of the region, but they range over much of Aricagua and neighboring regions as well. They are on good terms with those of the Choma who follow the jaguar (many of whom regard the Jaguar-People as the realization of their own ideals). They generally shun other humans for the most part, and, unlike Mana's Andaman, do not seek human prey.

The Jaguar-People can have shape-changing offspring only as a result of human matings. Thus, they will seek out human mates, often from among the Jaguar-Choma, but also from other groups as necessary.

Unfortunately, the humans who are chosen for such matings rarely survive the elaborate ceremony which is required by Jaguar-People tradition. Over the years, the Jaguar-People have evolved a fairly elaborate and sophisticated society. The center of this is their religion, an animalistic cult which worships a Jaguar-God. The religion is based on the sacred slopes of Mt. Huila (HWE-la), where the Jaguar-People come to meet and to offer sacrifice to their god. Their ritual human matings are also said to be held in this place.

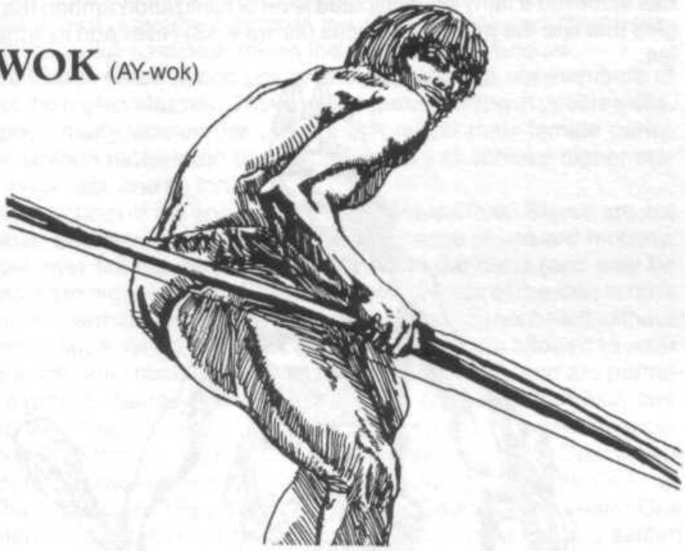
Around the sacred grounds stand huge, menacing statues, fourteen to twenty-one feet in height, which are carved in the likenesses of jaguars, humans, and half-changed Jaguar-People. These stand in a semi-circle with its base on a cliff-face, in which several caves occur. One is the ritual mating area, decorated with brightly painted geometric designs and gold ornaments, another a mine from which gold is extracted to adorn the statues and other sacred objects and places.

Within the semi-circle are a series of sacrificial pools, each one surrounded by boulders decorated with gold and carvings of the regular sacrificial victims — reptiles, amphibians, and humans. Ordinary ceremonies involve the sacrifice of animals to the god, but after each mating ritual is completed, humans are said to be sacrificed instead. (Female victims are kept until they produce offspring, and then are sacrificed.) A high priest (known as *The Great Jaguar*) is believed to hold sway over all such rituals, and to reside over a small group of acolytes. The exalted position of Great Jaguar can, it is said, be gained by any bold enough to challenge the holder of this office.

Once the challenge is issued, the two contestants wait until the next full moon, and then engage in a duel to the death. This duel is no set-piece single combat; it is a deadly hunt in which the two contestants must track one another down (often over many days and vast tracts of territory) and then close in for the kill. Victory is not so much based on superior strength, but on cunning and strategy.

When a Great Jaguar dies a natural death, or neither contestant survives a challenge duel, a modified version of the procedure is invoked. All who wish to become Great Jaguar declare their intent, and all participate in the hunt. Only he or she who kills all foes survives to be the new leader of the Jaguar-People.

AWOK (AY-wok)



Awok lies on the northeastern coast of Tamoanchan's East District, on the upper peninsula that forms the Acua Gulf. To the south and east the land touches on the Atlantean Ocean, while the north and west coasts are formed by the narrow Ocaraba Channel which separates Tamoanchan from the continent of Eria. To the southwest, Awok borders on Aricagua and Oguanabara, two other wild jungle regions of the East District. The rain forests are nearly impenetrable in this region, cutting the inhabitants off from contact overland with other parts of the continent. Nor are water routes practicable, for there is great danger from the Makara, sea devils who infest the coasts.

During the First Age of Atlantis the Makara were less of a problem, and there was contact between Awok and the outside world. Some traditions of those eras still linger in Awok today. Now, though, the inhabitants are largely isolated. They have some contact with the degenerate cultist cannibals of Oguanabara, who are regarded as dangerous enemies. Aside from that, it is only the occasional, very fortunate foreign visitor who can survive the perils of reaching Awok. As there is thought to be little of worth in the land, contact remains extremely rare.

Two dark-skinned tribes inhabit Awok's jungles. The Choma (KO-ma) are a wild, primitive, animistic people whose religion bids them live as their animal gods do, prowling the jungle underbrush in a solitary, bestial existence. The Timeri, on the other hand, are somewhat more sophisticated. But the encroaching jungle forever threatens to destroy all they seek to build, and they live a precarious life of hard work and frequent disappointment. There are no overt aggressions between the two tribes.

The Timeri tribe's economy depends on a slash and burn agriculture. Jungle is cleared by axe and fire, and fields cultivated until the persistent jungle growth chokes off the farming land thus obtained. The natural fertility of the soil, compounded by potash from the burning timber, makes the land very productive for a few years, but after that time, new sites must be cleared. The primary crop is manioc, but sweet potatoes, yams, pumpkins, coco and tobacco are also grown. The latter two are used as narcotics in various rituals and ceremonies. Rubber is also used, being incorporated ingeniously into certain weapons and tools.

Agriculture is supplemented by game hunted with pit traps and poison-tipped spears or blowgun darts. Their prey includes such animals as the bush pig, sloth, tapir, alligator, various types of monkeys, and some birds. Freshwater fishing in inland lakes and rivers is also common, using both trident-spears and large nets.

The Timeri live in several small communities, each numbering between fifty and two hundred people. An entire community is housed in a single large communal building with a roof of thatched palm leaves supported on timber posts up to thirty feet tall and extending almost to ground level. Communities are semi-permanent at best; when the ground can no longer support agriculture, the communal house is abandoned, and the community migrates to a new site.

Communities are almost completely self-sufficient, except that each is exogamous; i.e., mates must be taken from outside the community, this being an important way by which ideas and knowledge are spread between separate groups. The society stresses equality but distinction between the sexes, with female hunters and male farmers. The tribe fights only in self-defense, with every member of a group fighting when necessary. The Timeri lands are marked by monoliths. Territories belonging to a given community are determined by the placement of a monolith; all land within a day's journey of that monolith belongs to the group. The inscribed monolith is also the center of the group's religious life, for congregation on sacred or initiation days for the witches and warlocks of the Timeri people.

The Timeri religion is a strange offshoot of the primitive, Shamanistic worship which prevailed here long before the Atlanteans arrived. The Old Gods still dominate all, though some factions revere the more ancient True Elementals of Earth, Air, Water, and Fire.

The Choma, on the other hand, live savage and solitary lives. They live and hunt as the animals they worship do, and do not desire interaction with other people. They will initially flee any encounter, but may return in force to investigate trespassers on their territories.

All members of this scattered people are shamans, each having a particular type of animal which the individual adopts as his or her personal god. For much of the year, the Choma remain alone, avoiding human companionship (but not the company of animals). During "their" mating season (that of the god-animal), however, they seek out mates of their own following (i.e. others who have adopted the same animal as a god). When they mate, they remain together until the offspring they produce is old enough to be given to the Choma Shaman Chiefs (about one year of age).

The Shaman Chiefs live together in a megalithic communal house-temple called Oguaana (o-gwa-A-na). Here they are responsible for raising and educating the young in the ways of the Choma. As young adults, the Choma go out in the wild, but a few eventually return to themselves become Shaman Chiefs. The totem animal of the Shaman Chiefs is the owl, who symbolizes the magic of the Old Gods.

The location of Oguaana is known to none but the Choma themselves. It consists of a great Og monolith, surrounded by the stone dwellings of the Shaman Chiefs and by a circle of human rib bones dedicated to Hawwa. About a third of a mile away from the monolith, surrounding the sacred area, taboo totems mark the boundaries of a circle of defensive magic which bars all approach by anyone but other Choma tribesmen.

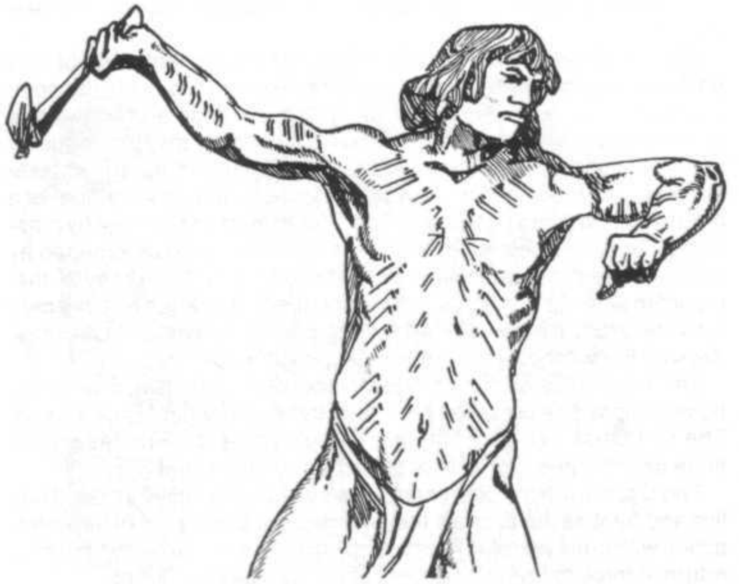
A traveler's tale in Atlantis tells of an explorer with some magic skill who once reached a great megalithic circle deep in Awok and discovered there various treasures dating back to Atlantean times, but the story is generally discounted by most folk.

BIRAMA (ber-AHM-a)

Lying right at the mouth of the Acua Gulf, Birama is an irregularly-shaped peninsula surrounded on three sides by water. The Atlantean Ocean lies north and east, the Gulf to the west, and the regions of Mana and Taracua to the south. The jungles of Birama are tangled and rugged, the haunt of many dangerous jungle predators: jaguars, caimans, giant boa constrictors, and wild boars are only a few of Birama's dangerous animals. A few of Mana's Andaman tribes roam the southern jungles, but the real danger of the land comes from a variety of intelligent, and evil, inhabitants.

People of other lands who know of Birama believe it to be infested with demons, and this is partly true. There are many of the minor demonic forms (gremlins, imps, and so forth) present in Birama, and even a fair number of Hantu (the so-called earth-bound demons).

Higher forms do not live in these jungles, but they do visit frequently at the behest of Birama's savage human inhabitants.



The Hoac (HO-ak) tribe which inhabits Birama are warrior-cannibals who practice demon-worship. They are friends to none, attacking strangers on sight. They eat those they can kill, but they also take captives who are used for religious purposes. Like the Taracuans, the Hoacans are brown-skinned and short of stature. Unlike their neighbors, however, Hoacans make extensive use of facial and body scarring as ornamentation.

The Hoacan religion is necromantic, and focused on the summoning and worship of a variety of Minor, Lesser, Winged, Common Greater Demons, and Incubi/Succubi. Much of the worship is simple appeasement of the demonic forces, but the Hoacan priests also request actual aid from time to time with special problems or dangers that threaten the tribe. The summonings are attended with great ritual, with cannibal feasts before and after the ceremony, and an offering of one or more human captives to the demons (the victims may be killed, or the demon may enslave them instead). Such a ritual is held at each full moon, and is attended by all the scattered members of the tribe, who meet in a secret place of great power somewhere in the heart of Birama.

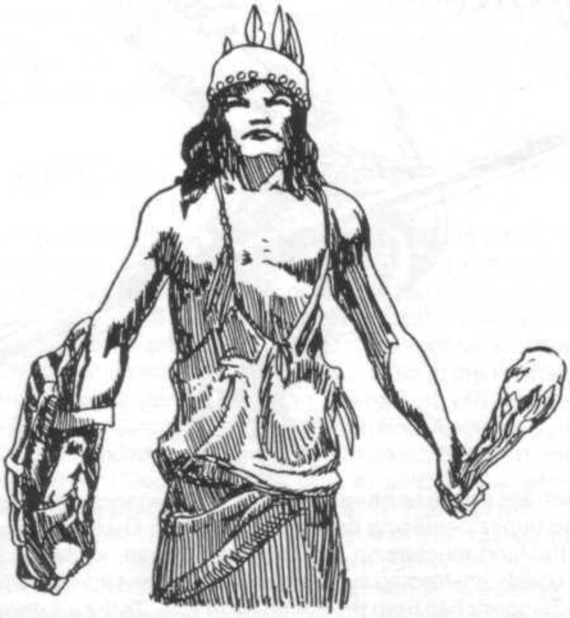
Because the Hoacans are always in need of victims, they spend much of their time raiding neighboring Taracua for sacrificial victims and for prey. Humans are their favorite food, and they also use human bones and skin for a variety of purposes: tools, clothing, tents, waterskins, and so forth. When they cannot find human prey, they will eat virtually any kind of plant or animal they happen to find. Even insects may serve as food from time to time.

The tribe is primitive in technology and social organization. Tools are of stone, bone, or wood; weapons include crude axes and spears, a few daggers, clubs, staffs, and rounded throwing-rocks. They know nothing of pottery-making, weaving, or any kind of sophisticated craft. Hoacan shamans are believed to have domesticated the poisonous Jararaca (Fer-de-Lance) snake, which they are said to use in combat with deadly effect. They roam Birama in loose, interconnected groups, with members constantly shifting from one tribe to another.

For the most part, the Hoacans stick to the Biraman interior. The coasts are the haunts of marauding Makara sea devils. Even the fierce Hoacan tribesmen will not willingly face these terrible denizens of the sea.

ECUA (EK-wa)

Part of Tamoanchan's central district, Ecua is bounded by the Elysium Sea to the west, Nazca and Quechua to the south, and the Acuan Gulf to the east. To the north, a narrow isthmus links the land to the northern and northeastern peninsulas of Tamoanchan. Ecua is a mountainous land, but supports a thriving river-valley culture which has achieved a fairly sophisticated level of civilization among the jungles that line the banks of Caucas (ka-wa-KAS) River and its tributaries.



The Ecuan people are short in stature, with swarthy skins and straight, black hair. The upper classes wear robes of brightly colored cloth, often decorated with geometric designs; members of the lower classes generally wear loin cloths. They are a hunter-gatherer culture, with some knowledge of agriculture but a decided preference for the hunt. Their hunters use bows, dipping arrows in a lethal toxin obtained from the secretions of the arrow-poison frog, a colorful species of amphibian native to the jungles of the region.

Ecua is a strong, centrally organized nation, headed by a ruler who carries the title of *The Cua* (kwa), which can be literally translated as "The Perfect Human." The entire social system of Ecua is based around the concepts of a descending order of perfection from the Cua down to the lowest of slaves. "Perfection" is judged by strength, intelligence, wealth, and fame. While an individual's initial position in society is largely hereditary, most Ecuans have ample opportunity to rise or fall entirely upon their own merits.

The Cua presides over five councils: *The Council of Warriors, The Council of Craftsmen, The Council of Shamans, The Council of the Highborn,* and *The Council of Ecua*. Each council corresponds to one of Ecua's five citizen classes (only slaves have no representation in government). The Councils are composed of elected representatives, and serve as advisory boards to inform The Cua of all matters relating to their individual areas of authority. The Cua himself is an absolute monarch who delegates power into the hands of these Councils.

The social classes themselves are listed below in descending order of importance. In the Highborn Class are The Cua and his family, plus all those who possess great wealth and/or power. The Councilmen of each of the Five Councils are part of this class automatically, giving many of them class standing in two different classes.

Next comes the Warrior Class, which consists solely of the active military. The six ranks within the class translate as military rank. Ecuan warriors wear headdresses and clothing made of animal skins, employing short bows, clubs, spears, obsidian daggers, and animal-hide shields. Before a battle, they often prepare themselves for combat by chewing coca leaves or drinking fermented juices made from fruits and berries, which can elevate them into a state of almost beserk battle frenzy.

The Shaman Class is third in standing, ranking lower than the military due to the continual presence of hostile nations on the southern borders. There are both male and female shamans, though high-level shamans or either sex are scarce.

The Craftsman Class is filled by all individuals who have a productive work skill. Potters, leatherworkers, woodcarvers, stone masons, and hunters all qualify for this class, as do sages, wizards, musicians, witch-hunters (employed against the Quechuans) and magicians. The level of skill held determines the rank of the individual.

The Ecuan Class is composed of those who are not members of one of the higher classes. They include those lacking in usable skills, the poor, many women (for despite theoretical male-female parity, fewer women receive the training necessary to achieve higher status), criminals, and so forth.

At the bottom of the social scale is the Slave Class. Slaves are not citizens, and have no representation or chance of upward mobility, but still may fall into one of six ranks within the class (and may be promoted to higher ranks by their masters). Slaves of the lowest rank are never permitted to remove their chains, and cannot be left without escort or supervision. Those of the highest rank are allowed to wear only a symbolic neck-band (often of precious metal), and are permitted a greater degree of personal freedom. All slaves are foreigners, prisoners of war, criminals, or the children of slaves. There is no provision for freedom from slavery, save at the clemency of the Cua; once a person becomes a slave he or she is considered a slave for life.

The population of Ecua is centered in the Caucas River Valley. One stretch of hospitable territory along this river is continuously settled over a length of sixty stadia (almost seven miles) along both banks of the river. This settlement is Cauc (ka-WOK), the capital of the realm. The "city" of Cauc is interesting in that all buildings in the settlement are located right along the river; they do not extend inland at all. Each stretch of 10 stadia (2,020 yards) of Cuac is occupied by a specific social class, with dwellings occcupied from north to south in ascending social order. The northernnmost building is a dormitory housing the lowest slaves in the city, while the mansion at the southern end of the city is occupied by The Cua and his immediate family. Social position is thus directly reflected in location along the river, and by the quality of construction of the individual buildings (from mud/thatch huts in the north to massive stone constructions in the south).

Cauc is not the only city, of course. Other settlements include Gualilagua (gwa-li-LA-gwa), Oguayaquila (oh-gwa-ya-KEE-la), Ocatagua (oh-ka-TA-gwa), Sogamo (so-GA-moh) and Atarata (at-ar-A-ta). Unlike Cauc, these cities are arranged not in straight lines, but in spiral form, with the highest social ranks living in the center of the city, and the lowest at the outer end of the spiral.

The Ecuans are judged a wealthy people. They work a variety of metals and stones, and have an abundance of gold in their land. Silver, copper, turquoise, emeralds, and similar resources are also reasonably common. They are good craftsmen, decorating even the simplest items with elaborate carvings, inlays, relief, and painting.

Equa is stable and strong, and has resisted the advances of both Quechua and Nazca for centuries. They are not, however, powerful enough to make successful territorial inroads in either nation. As a result, a permanent state of war exists, and has lasted for so long as to have become largely ritualized. The Ecuans regulate their strategies and tactics according to a complex formula of interpretation by religious leaders; Astronomical, Religious, and Historical precedents are combined to tell the Ecuan leaders when to attack, when to defend, and even the sort of battle plans to be put into effect. For instance, no Ecuan general would even contemplate fighting a battle on New Year's Day under the full moon; New Year's Day is noted for the great defeat at Tolimo (to-LEE-mo) eight hundred years ago, and the full moon has always been regarded as an omen of ill-fortune on that battlefield.

GUALAGUALA (gwa-la-GWA-la)

Similar in most respects to its sister island of Aconcagua, Gualaguala is the southernmost region of Tamoanchan's South District. It, like Aconcagua, is rugged and poor, but slightly less barren than its neighbor. Here on Gualaguala, the greater abundance of wildlife enabled the Chono tribesmen to gather into larger groups than on Aconcagua, and to establish more permanent dwelling-places than is possible for their semi-nomadic hunting brethren on the other island. There is some true agriculture on Gualaguala, and one settlement which is large enough to be called a village, Tagua (TA-gwa). Where most settlements on both islands are rather temporary affairs supporting only a handful of families each, Tagua holds several dozen small families in a circular village of dome-shaped huts of bone and skin, which are suprisingly comfortable even to visiting outsiders. Outside the village is the Shaman House, where the High Shaman of the Chono resides and offers counsel and teaching to any who seek his aid.

Near the Shaman House is Achacala (ash-ok-A-la), a sacred monolith which is central to the religion of the Chono of both islands. The monolith itself is dedicated to the Old God Og, while an enclosing circle of mastodon bones honors the goddess Hawwa. Within the circle, a shaman's power is believed to increase dramatically.

The Chono have worshipped the Old Gods here since time immemorial, and continue to hold all their rituals and ceremonies at this ancient place of power. The Shaman reigns supreme at Achacala; though other magic-users — druids, clerics, witches, and the like — can sense the power of the shrine, it is said that only a shaman of the Old Gods can fully grasp the total aspect of the divine power coursing through Achacala. Even then, it takes a Chono Shaman, in harmony with the ancient power of this mystical place, to call forth the full powers of the sacred shrine. Chono Shamans are distinctive in appearance, their Neanderthaloid features unmasked by facial hair, but with broad stripes of black, white, and grey painted on their faces.

MANA (ma-NA)

Mana lies close to the mouth of the Acua Gulf, on the southern peninsula forming that Gulf. Taracua lies to the south and east, the Gulf to the west, with the fearsome land of Birama bordering Mana's north frontier. The land here is typical of the East District, covered with tangled jungle and inhabited by a variety of dangerous creatures.

Much of Mana's flora is deadly, including such terrible plants as stranglevines, scarlet leeches, charmplants, and violet creepers. Most such hazards are found along the coast, where the jungle is especially dense.

Many demonic creatures are said to inhabit Mana, most believed to have migrated across the tenuous border from neighboring Birama. For the most part, these are Hantu, Gremlins, Imps, *Korupira* (forest devils) and Manes, beings who are generally solitary in nature. There are a few jungle dwelling dinosaurs and the usual mix of more ordinary jungle animals. One of the greatest dangers is offered by the tribes of Andaman (ahn-DA-men; animal-men crossbreed) who populate this region.

The Andaman are of several varieties: leopard-men, bear-men and panther-men are said to be most common, though there are several other species as well. All are remnants of the bygone First Age, when Atlantean sorcerers engaged in the grisly practice of crossbreeding humans with animals. None of the species number very many, and they tend to live in relatively small groups.

The Andaman seek out humans both within Mana and across the borders in Taracua and Birama. Humans are sought for purposes of breeding, but may also be killed for food. The Andaman tend to be hostile humans who trespass on their own territories, and the more savage of the shape-changers will sometimes launch raids into human territories out of sheer bloodlust. Conversely, some tribes are believed to be friendly towards man.

There are humans in Mana too, but they are little more than animals themselves. They are organized in small family groups, using tools no more sophisticated then unshaped rocks and tree branches. Their language is a crude assortment of squeals, grunts, clucks, and similar noises used in conjunction with exaggerated body movements, about the same as that used by many primitive apes. This language can transmit only the simplest of messages, mostly basic emotional or emphatic concepts.

These people are human in form, but live no differently than their ape ancestors. They gather vegetation for food, only occasionally eating insects or small animals. They have no social organization beyond the simple family group, no religion, no tradition or history, and no contact with outsiders except for occasional accidental encounters. The Animal-People, who in many ways are far more sophisticated, often mate with these primitive humans.

HUAC (HU-wok)

The peninsular region of Huac occupies the northern reaches of Tamoanchan, a land of harsh deserts, rugged mountains, and narrow coastal plains, some of them covered over by dense jungles. Huac is bounded primarily by water, with the Elysium Sea to the west and the Sea of Anahuac to the east. An island north of the main peninsula, Tamawa, is commonly counted as part of Huac proper. Only to the south does Huac actually join with the rest of the continent.

The region is wild and uninhabited, save by diverse and often dangerous fauna. Snakes, tarantulas, lizards, scorpions, and vultures are common to the deserts, along with coyotes and other larger, solitary animals. In the mountains, the traveler may encounter ocelots, pumas, peccaries, jaguars, and bears; the plains play host to such beasts as deer, lynx, hare, and armadillo. The jungle wildlife is diverse and abundant, but insects — mosquitos, leeches, and so forth — are especially common.

Though uninhabited now, Huac is known to have once supported a flourishing civilization, now long since vanished. Legend has it that this culture existed long before the rise of Atlantis, and was dying out even as the first Atlanteans began to look beyond their island continent. The only remnants of this lost civilization are the ruined cities and ceremonial complexes they left behind. Like Ulloa in the far south, these silent and mysterious ruins — said to be haunted by strange beings and ancient magic, and to hold treasures beyond all comprehension — are all that are left. No one knows the fate of the people of Huac, or even who they were.

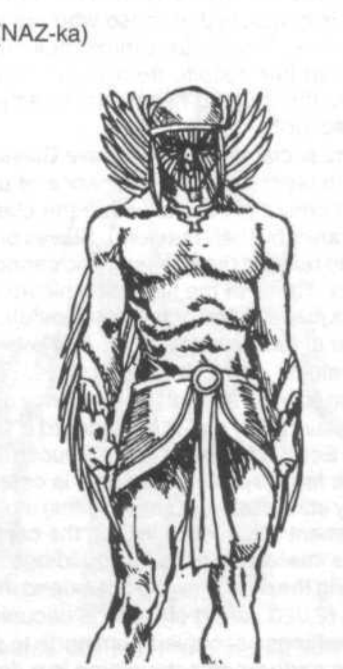
A few cities have been visited by scholars and treasure-hunters, who have unearthed artifacts and some evidence regarding the nature of the lost culture. They are thought to have been human, or at least to have been of human size and general form, for their buildings and implements suit humans perfectly. They were a race which loved beautiful things: sculptures intricately carved form single gigantic emeralds of perfect hue, and many smaller jewels and trinkets using gemstones, gold, jade, and other such materials. The rose was a common subject for their sculpture, as were jaguars, serpents, and many other animals.

It is said that the Atlanteans, during the First Age, sought to settle Huac, and developed extensive plans for their colonization project. The region was divided into several districts, each named for a projected settlement. Some of the ruins were explored as well. Plans were made to establish coastal havens for trade routes into the Elysium Sea, plus hemp farms (for rope and hashish), emerald mines, silver mines, and lead mines. Tamawa was targeted to support a small colony to quarry blocks of serpentine from an immense coastal cliff almost entirely made up of this stone.

Only a few settlements were ever started, however, due to the subsequent decline of Atlantean power. The districts were named, and those names survive even today on Atlantean maps. These regions include Ahuachapan (a-WOK-a-pan), Managua (man-A-gua), Michuacan (mik-WOK-kan), Oaxaca (wax-OK-a). Ocalahuacon (ohk-a-la-WOK-on), Sinaloa (sin-a-LO-a), Tacuba (ta-KOO-ba), and Tenango (te-NAN-GO). Michuacan and Oaxaca held Atlantean hemp farms, and there were a few small silver and lead mines in Ahuachapan.

The most impressive ruins lie within Tacuba and Tenango, the most mysterious in Ahuachapan and Ocalahuacon. Most ruins include great step-pyramids, large monoliths and statues of great size. Long abandoned, they are overgrown with vines and choked with creepers and other vegetation. This alone makes them hazardous to explore, even ignoring the traditions of evil creatures and other fell guardians which are said to inhabit them. Two ruined cities, known as Tamistitan (tam-i-STEE-tan) and Achamaho (ak-a-MA-ho) are particularly famous among scholars and adventurers alike. Large and imposing, neither has ever been successfully explored.

NAZCA (NAZ-ka)



Nazca is one of the best-known and most powerful lands in Tamoanchan, and is perhaps the most unusual of the regions in the continent's Central Region. The Elysium Sea forms the western boundary of Nazca. Ecua lies to the north, Quechua to the east, and Paragua and Ulloa to the south.

Most of Nazca is extremely mountainous, and in many respects similar to the often barren reaches of Ulloa to the south. The chief fertile land of the region is concentrated in five low-lying river valleys in the central section of the realm. Only in these valleys do the rivers flow all year round. Most are seasonal, with flash floods in the spring giving way to drought in late summer and fall. Aside from the Five Valleys, the only productive regions are the unique fog oases, or "lomas." A loma occurs only within certain highly specific limits of topography, weather, and soil conditions; they can exist only near the ocean at elevations of 600 to 2,000 feet. Ocean fogs roll into valleys in these areas during the winter, producing rainfall and filling underground pools and streams. The result is abundant vegetation in an area which would otherwise be nothing but desert, where animals of all kinds are found. Outside of the river valleys and lomas, conditions are harsh and population scarce.

The land of Nazca takes its name from that of a particular tribe of the Five Valleys region, a group also known as the Falcon People. This tribe has subjugated the other tribes in the region into a single Nazca nation. Their culture is warlike, and the realm is involved in power struggles with the neighboring realms of Ecua and Quechua. A need for more workable land has led to schemes to conquer Paragua, but so far they have been halted by Quechuan interest in the same area and by the dangers of Paragua itself.

The Falcon People are true humans, not another species of Animal-Men. They take their name from their ancestors' worship of the Falcon as a totem deity. Members of the Nazca tribe can be distinguished by tatoos which are worn on their faces, resembling stylized falcons, and the falcon-feather capes they wear. They also use falcons in battle and on the hunt, and the falcon motif to decorate their homes, pottery, clothing, and jewelry. Nazca beliefs center on emulation of the falcon in all things; their view of life is as of a flight through the air, and their lightning-fast hit-and-run battle tactics are those of a falcon swooping down from the skies.

The Nazca seat of power is in the Five Valleys. Their capital is the city of Cahuachi (ka-HWASH-ee), in the Valley of the Falcon. It is located in the fertile fork of land which lies between the Ica (EYE-ka) and Nazca Rivers. Their other major cities, Ica, Caango (kay-AN-go), Kotozh (KO-tozh), Pachacamac (pa-SHAK-a-mak), Tambo (TAM-bo), and Teote (tay-OH-tee), lie in this same general area, which is a paradise compared to most of the rest of the realm. This central area is virtually inaccessible to any invader, and is protected from the Quechuans by rugged mountains and narrow, easily defended passes. The nation of Ecua, through often hostile, is distant. A large stretch of barren, Nazcan-controlled coastline separates the valley from the Ecuan border, and Nazca controls everything south to the desolate regions of Ulloa and Paragua. As the falcon does not live in mysterious Ulloa, the Nazca have never contemplated settlement of the area (mere superstitions about the land do not frighten them).

The valleys and the lomas are the only areas where either hunting or agriculture are possible. Hunting is an unreliable source of food at best, so that most must be obtained from small, domesticated herds of llamas, alpacas, and vicunas.

The bulk of protein in the Nazca diet, however, is derived from seafood. The Nazca are not seafarers, but some of their subjects along the coast do venture offshore in cumbersome, barge-like boats built of balsa. They fish the shallows with net and trident, and dried fish is a staple even in distant inland areas. Other subject tribes are concerned primarily with simple agriculture, with staple crops including manioc, corn, sweet potatoes, peanuts, and cacti fruit.

The Five Valleys provide mineral resources that make Nazca one of the richest realms in Tamoanchan. Substansive deposits of iron are present in the valleys, along with zinc, copper, gold, silver, and platinum. Tin is not uncommon, and the Valley of the Falcon has small quantities of quicksilver which are exploited. Most metals are mined in nugget form and hammered to form objects, though smelting is not unknown, and is used for large projects.

In the First Age, the Nazca were conquered by the Atlanteans, and from them absorbed and retained many Atlantean ideals and concepts. Amazons from Hesperia also conquered the area, but were only beginning to integrate it into their empire when civil war caused them to withdraw. From the Hesperians, the Nazca tribe learned how a small, militaristic nation could rule many more numerous but disorganized subject realms.

Most tribes, the Nazca excepted, reverted to their pre-Atlantean ways once foreign domination ended. The Nazca, though, retained a city-based civilization, and slowly began to consolidate their hold on the Five Valleys. In a land where good, fertile ground was limited, the Nazca were motivated to spread and dominate over the broadest possible range. Their fierce and well-disciplined warriors overran the less sophisticated tribes, and quickly unified the region into a small but centralized nation. Each conquered tribe is controlled by a small Nazca garrison-unit, in the Hesperian style; the tribes support the Nazca overlords with all kinds of needed resources, from food and metals to military manpower and manual labor.

Nazca is ruled by a military hierarchy consisting of five warrior chieftans (selected by a council of the ten highest-ranking warriors). The highest of the chieftans has five votes, the next highest four, the third highest three, and so forth. When establishing laws, decrees, or policies of any type a majority vote is necessary to pass any measure. In times of crisis, the warrior council can vote to grant absolute power for a given period of time (usually a year) to the highest of the chieftans.

This government is characteristic of the whole of Nazcan society. All members of the Nazca tribe, whether by birth or by marriage, are members of the upper strata of the realm's society. Only they can obtain any social rank; conquered tribesmen assume social status only in the event of marriage to a Nazca. Any Nazca, even those elevated by marriage, receive the ritual falcon tattoo, and must undergo a rite of passage in which they capture a falcon in the wild and add its feathers to a falcon-feather cloak already made by the new Nazca's family. Failure of the rite results in expulsion from the tribe, for only true Nazca are permitted to wear the colorful falcon decorations.

Nazca must serve at least one year in military service. The rank attained denotes social status for all aspects of life thereafter. Though the tribesmen supply military auxiliaries, only the Nazca undergo this mandatory service, and only they achieve social rank as a result. Subject tribes are all equal, and inferior, in the eyes of the realm.

The wealth of the realm is also distributed according to military/social rank. Those of no rank (the conquered tribes, or those Nazca who lose status) receive only as much as they need to live a simple life. They cannot own stone huts, nor can they amass excessive amounts of personal belongings. They cannot move from one village to another without permission. The harshness of Nazca rule is alleviated somewhat by the frequency with which the ruling class intermarries with the subject tribes, raising their spouses and children to Nazca status. The upper classes receive wealth and luxury according to social rank.

Once the mandatory year of military service is completed, Nazca warriors may leave and rejoin service with the army as often as they desire, in terms of one year each. Obviously, since military rank equals social rank, there is a powerful inducement to serve for a prolonged period, but those who do choose to leave can enter any career they wish and live a life of relative (compared to the classless tribesmen) ease.

Nazca society is built around a male-dominant system. The females occupy a subordinate position in most aspects of society, they are masters of many crafts and artforms, especially all types of weaving and pottery sculpture. Their work is famed for its artistry as well as its functional ability. The Nazca subordinate all arts, sciences, and magic knowledge to military purposes (and, to a lesser extent, to improving the life of the uppper classes). Knowledge that will not enable the Nazca to become better warriors is considered unimportant.

The training of the Nazca warrior is rigorous and intense. Most are skilled in woodlore, tracking, and covert fighting techniques, as well as the handling of falcons (trained for use in battle). The Nazca use specialized units for certain operations, employing scouts along their borders and sending spies into neighboring lands to acquire information.

Small bands of witch hunters also have been incorporated into the military, and are used exclusively against the religious fanatics of neighboring Quechua. Other forces are equally distributed throughout the realm, with the largest portion of the military being concentrated at Cahuachi.

Weaponry used by the Nazca includes a hafted stone throwing mace; hafted, polished-stone axes; falcon talons (fist-held iron talons anchored to the wrist) inlaid with gold; slings; spears made of magical chanta wood (hardwood palm) tipped with obsidian (or, more rarely, iron) heads; short swords of obsidian, bronze, and iron; long daggers of bone or bronze; spear-throwers; short bows; obsidian-edged clubs; and staffs. Armor is disdained by the Nazca, who go into battle in capes and hoods of falcon-feathers, with their tattoos prominent. The spectacle of the Nazca mustering for battle is a fearsome sight, and the terror tends to offset the lack of physical protection.

Nazca Religion

The Nazca once worshipped the falcon, but now it is no more than a symbol of their nation and their power. There is no organized religion among the members of the Nazca tribe, at least none which is publicly acknowledged and accepted. The classless subject tribes, however, are given complete religious freedom. Most pay homage to Hawwa, one of the Old Gods; Eloah is favored by a large body of worshippers, as well. Symbolic representations of the sun and moon are found throughout the country, and at times, the Nazca falcon symbol is incorporated with these religious signs. No other deities are so honored under the Nazca rule.

While individuals are allowed to worship in virtually any non-violent way they choose, they cannot congregate in groups which include anyone beyond immediate family members. Shamans, Druids, and other such religious classes are tolerated under the same rules, but must renounce their beliefs publicly if raised to the Nazca tribe, embracing the state as their single object of loyalty and devotion.

Necromancy in all its forms, however, is outlawed, and greatly feared.

Nazca burial rites call for family members to be interred side by side, on family ground; personal possessions favored by the individual in life are buried with the body. Infant corpses are showered with jewelry and toys. Great care is taken to guard the bodies against theft, so prevalent is the fear of the Undead.

Points of Interest

There are pyramids in Nazca, built by the Atlanteans during their reign, but restored and maintained by the Nazca since. They are focal points for political and military rallies, rituals, and as the ordinary places of congregation for Nazcans. Vendors set up shop around them, and actors, musicians, and entertainers use them as a stage on festival days. They are a prominent part of the social life of all Nazcan cities.

Perhaps the most stunning achievement of the Nazca race is the presence of their giant line symbols on the Nazca Plain and various mountain sides. These represent an experiment in rune magic on a vast scale, intended to call down favorable effects over a large area. *The Tree of Life* rune overlooking the Bay of Paracas was drawn to promote fertility and agriculture in that area. The Falcon rune on the Nazca Plain is intended to provide magical support to the Nazcan realm. The potency of these massive magical inscriptions remains a matter of conjecture.

Foreign Relations

Nazcan trade is limited at best, as their near neighbors are hostile and their own culture unable to handle seafaring of any kind. They do occasionally trade with groups of Elysium's Tritons, and with the nomads of the Elysium Sea. But though trade is limited, Nazcan coinage has spread far from her own shores. Nazca coins, known as *falcons*, are made of gold and silver and are famed for their purity and superb workmanship. Even enemies of the Nazca accept their coinage at face value, so excellent is their minting.

The national policy of expansion and the Nazcan hatred of Necromancy are the twin reasons for the tension between the realm and Quechua and Ecua. The Nazcans despise the Quechuan theocracy, and will consider nothing but war, either open or secret, against that nation. The Quechuans have made enemies all around them as a result of their intolerant policies, and the Nazca are by far their most implacable foes.

The Ecuans are treated with less outright hostility, and wars on that frontier are only intermittent. As for travelers from more distant lands; foreign visitors must stay within the guidelines of Nazcan religious law, and they may not openly exhibit their beliefs in front of true Nazca citizens. Penalties for such offenses (and for most sorts of civil disturbances, as well) are harsh, and often cruelly inventive.

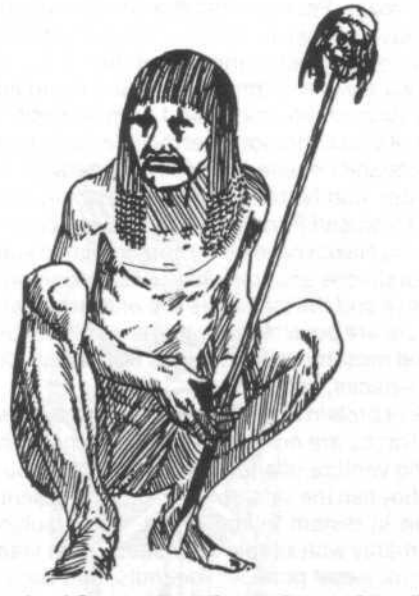
OGALAPAGO (O-ga-la-pa-GO)

This large island is notable primarily for its volcanoes, several of which are known to be active. The jungles which surround the isle's coastal regions team with a variety of unusual animals including a giant species of tortoise.

Seanomads of Munark come here often to rest and resupply. Otherwise very little human traffic reaches this lonely island. Nazcans occasionally venture this far from their shores, but few other fisherfolk of western Tamoanchan will dare such a long voyage.

In the deep central valleys lives a tribe of neanderthaloids that fled from First Age Atlantean conquerors. Ever since then they have shunned all contact with outsiders, avoiding even the peaceful Munark Seanomads.

OGUANABARA (o-gwa-na-BAR-a)



The jungle peninsula of Oguanabara forms the northern limit of the Acua Gulf, and is part of the East District of Tamoanchan. Water lies to west, south, and east, all of it part of the gulf; to the north are the two wild regions of Awok and Aricagua.

The region is uninhabited save for a small tribe of humans known as the Abara, a tall and dark-skinned race believed to be related to the Nazca. The Abara are much-feared in these parts, for they are extremely hostile and are known to engage in a number of grisly practices.

Not the least of these is the taking of human heads as war trophies. The Abara head hunters range far and wide throughout the region, hunting for food and searching for members of other tribes. Any humans encountered by the Abara are slain out of hand, their heads taken and subjected to a most gruesome process: the skull is removed, the eyes and lips sewn up (to keep the victim's spirit from returning), and the remains treated with certain herbs and filled with hot sand. This procedure serves to preserve and shrink the "head", after which it is hung by the hair and worn as a mark of proficiency in battle. The number of such trophies which any Abara warrior possesses is deemed a mark of his or her status; the more heads a warrior owns, the greater is his or her reputation within the tribe.

As repugnant as this practice may seem, Abara shrunken heads are often sought after by traders. They bring a high price (1,000 — 4,000 G.P.) as curios in certain lands, and are valued as fetishes by necromancers and other practitioners of Black Magic.

As it is said that the Abara will not kill Andaman (whom they believe are akin to demons), some Andaman tribes have taken to trading live human victims to the Abara for shrunken heads (two or more humans per each such trophy is claimed to be the going rate). This perhaps explains the appearance of these vile objects in such far away places as Tartessos, Qaddan, and Sheba.

PARAGUA (pa-RA-gwa)

Paragua is a transitional region, considered part of the Central District, but actually blending facets of both Central and Eastern terrain and climate. The western portions are mountainous; to the east are extensive jungles very similar to neighboring Aigua, which lies to the east. North is Acua Gulf, and to the south is an arm of the Atlantean Ocean and the jutting peninsula of Ulloa. Due west lies Nazca, with Quechua bordering on the northwest.

It is a land untouched by man for many eons. Not since the Uragua migrated through here from Ulloa to Aigua have humans resided here. But, like Birama and Mana, Paragua is home to various demonic beings. Hantu and gremlins are particularly common in Paragua.

Several different types of Hantu inhabit the Tumucumaaye (tu-mu-ku-MA-ya) Mountains in the west of Paragua. Many live in deep cave systems, caves which are also home of a carniverous fungus known as the Scarlet Leech and many other fearful denizens of the dark depths. Rumors of vast treasures hidden in these dangerous tunnels are a frequent lure for adventurers, though most of the neighboring tribes fear this area.

Gremlins live in mountain valleys and jungle plains along the borders of Quechua and Nazca. They are said to enjoy harrassing humans from these lands, and love to mimic human institutions and customs with savage gremlin humor. According to local legend, the gremlins long ago claimed all of Paragua as their "nation," and proclaimed one of their number "King."

The gremlin king supposedly has a following of advisors and bodyguards, and has built a "great gremlin city," called (in typical gremlin style) Ocawatazalacawatala (ok-a-wat-a-za-la-caw-a-tal-a), known among the gremlins themselves as *Oa* (O-a). In this "city," built entirely to gremlin scale, the Royal Palace is the largest building, towering three stories (36 inches) high, and encompassing an area of 34 inches by 64 inches. The palace is said to be constructed of solid gold, melted down from a variety of objects stolen from humans. A gremlin-sized step pyramid, and various great monoliths (actually small stones) are also present in the gremlin city.

In imitation of leaders of both Earthly and Unearthly planes of existence, the King of Gremlins has purportedly created a "foreign policy" for his realm of Paragua. Recognition and an exchange of ambassadors was demanded from Nazca and Quechua. In the wake of unbelieving refusal from those two nations, the gremlins are now "at war," which means that any and all humans who pass through Paragua are likely to be subject to the harrassment of the humorous but often brutal gremlins.

In imitation of Nazcan and Quechuan society, the gremlins have conquered and enslaved a number of Sprites. These beings are condemned to forced labor by building additions to Oa, working miniature farms, and so forth. The slaves are outnumbered, and have been physically and spiritually broken by gremlin torture.

QUECHUA (KESH-wa)

The nation of Quechua, like Nazca, is an advanced and civilized realm of Tamoanchan's Central District. The northeastern coastline adjoins the Acua Gulf. Northwest is Ecua, while Nazca is southwest and Paragua southeast. The land is rugged and mountainous in the interior, but the coastlands are low-lying, fertile, and in many areas clad in jungle. The region is home to a tall, bronze-skinned race of humans known as the Quechua.

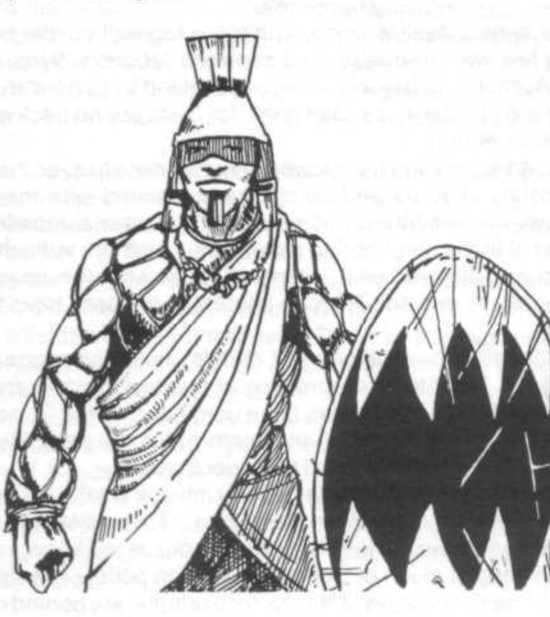
Quechua can claim social and spiritual descent from Atlantis, which ruled the region during the First Age. The nation takes its name from the tribe which rose to preeminence in the wake of the Atlantean withdrawal. The Quechua tribe took over the knowledge and religion of the Atlanteans and slowly adapted it to their own ends. Though there is now little resemblance between the old Atlantean ways and the contemporary Quechuans, the power of Quechua could never have formed had not the men of Atlantis come first.

The structure of the entire Quechuan culture is a result of the manipulation of the priests of Tici Virachocha (TEE-kee-vir-a-KO-sha), the supreme deity of the Quechuan pantheon. The priests *claim "the will of Viracocha" as the basis for any and all of their pro*nouncements concerning the structure and policy of Quechuan society.

Religion dominates all aspects of Quechuan life. The High Priests rule over a religio-military state in which the majority are oppressed for the benefit of the ruling minority. There are three social classes, each with many internal subdivisions of its own: The Priests are the highest class, followed in turn by the Warrior-Priests, and, finally, the Low or Common Class.

All citizens of Quechua, upon reaching puberty, are given the opportunity to enter the Priesthood. If they fail to meet the requirements, they may then attempt entrance into the Warrior-Priest (Paladin) class. Should they flunk entrance requirements here, they become members of the Common Class. Thus, social mobility has nothing to do with birth, but strictly with the ability to meet the established class requirements.

The Priests of Quechua are the highest social class in the realm, as well as being the religious leaders (subdivisions of this class correspond directly to character class level). The Priests rule the nation completely, receiving most of the benefits of Quechua's resources. Their power derives from their position as the intercessors between the people and the gods.



The middle class of Quechua is made up of the Warrior-Priests. This class is responsible for carrying out the will of the Priests, but has some influence on government through the use of Warrior-Priests as advisors to the high-level priests. Their prime duties are to enforce the laws of Quechua, to defend the realm from foreign dominance, and to expand the territory and glory of Quechua over other lands. Quechuan Warrior-Priests wear quilted cotton armor, paint their faces with colored pigments, and wield obsidian clubs.

The Low, or Common Class includes all who are neither Quechuan Priests nor Warrior-Priests, and is the most numerous of the social classes. The subdivisions are complex and intricate, and are indications of popularity and respect; they vary considerably from one area of the realm to another. Generally, only Commons pay any attention to subclass divisions, as Warrior-Priests and the Priests themselves consider the Common class as being below their notice. Only when laws are broken are Commoners given any special notice, and then only for the time it takes to pass a swift, harsh sentence. Minor crimes carry enslavement as the most common punishment, while repeated offenses of major crimes usually result in death by religious sacrifice.

Despite this, the Low Class supports the Priests and the Warrior-Priests completely. The possiblity that one's children may rise to higher station generally offsets the harshness of the regime, and the religious awe surrounding the upper classes further helps in this process.

Conquered tribes provide all the food and material things the upper classes may need or want. Terrace farming in the mountains is common, but it is mostly the coastal lowlands which supply produce. Hunting, however, is the mainstay of the Quechuan diet; the eastern slopes of the Tumacumaaye Mountains, and the lowlands around Acua Gulf support a variety of game animals. Fishing and frogging is also common to supply food for the inhabitants of the Lake Titicaca region.

Most of the tribes conquered by the Quechua have never progressed past simple stone-age hunter-gatherer techniques. They continue much as they always did, but under Quechuan domination. Food and furs (used by the upper classes for rugs and blankets) are demanded as tribute, and the religious and social control of these tribes is complete.

The coastal tribes around Acua Gulf are fiercer, but still bound to Quechua. They are in most respects similar to the mountain tribes, but are more militaristic. They also fish extensively, usually with nets and barbed-bone harpoons (and sometimes wooden tridents) from dugouts or log rafts. They are not, however, a seafaring people.

There is a trade settlement, called Ayamagua (ay-a-MAG-wa) on the gulf coast, used solely as a link with Taracua and its supply of precious iron. Goods are transported infrequently — perhaps once per year — via a large log barge-raft.

The settlement itself is small, with a few log-wall buildings inhabited by a few warrior-priests and common laborers. When goods arrive by Ayamagua, they are transported inland by porters. In fact, all transport is by porter and sedan chair, for there are no pack or riding animals in Quechua.

Quechuan expansion has slowed in recent decades, as the neighboring realms of Ecua and Nazca have resisted with increasing stauchness all Quechuan encroachment. Border skirmishes and raids against these neighboring nations are common, but achieve little. Paragua, to the southeast, is tangled jungle without human inhabitants, but the terrain and Nazcan interest in the area have led to a stalemate.

Quechua mines several types of metals, including copper, silver, lead, and tin. The Atlantean practice of overlaying walls and other structures with such metals has been continued by the Quechuans, and gold, silver, copper, and tin gleam brilliantly from the walls, columns, and stylized statues of the Quechuans.

Iron is a major exception to the general mineral wealth in Quechua; there are no known deposits in the region. The knowledge of ironworking, preserved in ancient Atlantean record, is still known, and it is iron which shapes much of Quechua's foreign policy. The extensive deposits in the Five Valleys of Nazca, for example, are behind much of the emnity between the two lands (though Nazcan religious intolerance is another major factor). The trade with Taracua is a poor substitute for actual control of a regular supply of iron, since the price of Taracuan iron is exorbitant. Quechuan policy currently seeks either to establish trade of their own with Atlantis, or the conquest of Taracua to control the trade ports there. Despite the abundance of metals, and the knowledge to exploit them, many items are still made of bone, pottery, reeds, skins, or stone. Though Commoners craft metal weapons, tools, and utensils of all kinds, they may not own them; metal goods may only be used by members of the upper classes.

Of precious stones, quartz and turquoise are the only kinds commonly available. The Common craftsmen who use these stones produce high-quality jewelry and sculptures. Quartz sculptures inlaid with various metals are much in demand by all classes in Quechua (such sculptures are one of the few luxury items allowed to Commoners). No finer examples of quartz sculpture can be found in the world.

Quechuan architecture is spectacular. Ceremonial centers can be found throughout Quechua, where the Priests and Warrior-Priests are housed in palace-like structures. These impressive, often immense structures are usually made of sun-dried brick, though some are carved from solid stone or are built of giant stone blocks in the old Atlantean fashion.

The Atlantean influence is evident in many phases of Quechuan architecture. The lines of buildings are straight and precise, stones and bricks polished smooth and flat and precision fitted. Though the Atlanteans once erected great pyramids to Atlas, the Priests had these torn down and replaced by their own monuments, mostly using the same stones.

Quechuan structures of the greatest size and impressiveness include palaces, religious shrines, barracks, fortifications, treasuries, and large warehouse-markets. Each of these is controlled by members of the upper classes.

Commoners may not build of stone or brick, and are found living in everything from branch and skin huts to log buildings to floating reed villages on Lake Titcaca and cliff-dwellings carved out of caves in mountain areas. Each of the subjugated tribes has its own favored building materials and methods.

Religion in Quechua

The Quechuan religion originally began as an amalgamation between the Atlantean cult of Atlas (Atici, in early Quechuan writings), and the tribal deity Viracocha. The two have been identified with one another as Tici Viracocha, a powerful but harsh deity who requires the intercession of the Quechuan Priest Class to maintain and support his worshippers. As a result, the priesthood has absolute power over the people through their position as interpretors of the god's will.

Tici Viracocha is a ravenous god, one who demands human sacrifice — not of captives or foreigners, but of his own worshippers. His symbol is the moon, a common motif in stylistic art and crafts. To appease his need for human flesh, and hence to win his continued support for the Quechuan people, the priests have instituted the Lottery. All members of the common Class are subject to The Lottery; only volunteers (who hardly ever enter) are taken from among the upper two classes. Those chosen by The Lottery are sacrificed to Tici Viracocha on the next holy day. The number of Lotteries held in a year, and the number of victims chosen, varies. (The average is six lotteries a year and a total of 36 people chosen over the course of that year.)

It is interesting to note that those who have earned the emnity of the Priest class often seem to find themselves selected, not long thereafter, for the inclusion in the next sacrifice. It is fairly plain to outsiders that the Lottery is a simple way for the Priests to exercise total control over the population as needed.

Although it may seem that the Priests cannot be circumvented, there are a few splinter cults within Quechua. These are radical, deviant factions within the upper classes, all of them weak in both power and membership. One such cult is said to employ the Abara technique of shrinking heads on entire bodies, then animating the shrunken corpse for use as a spy or familiar.

The only other non-legal organization of any consequence is the cult of The Sons of Belial. This ancient Atlantean religious group has gained a few converts within Quechua, having been introduced by one of the few foreigners who was ever able to become a citizen of the Warrior-Priest class. Most adherents to the cult are of the same class, almost all of them of low to middle rank. Their avowed purpose is to sweep away the dominant religion of Quechua.

TARACUA (tar-a-KU-a)

As part of the East District of Tamoanchan, Taracua is basically a low-lying, jungle-dominated region. South and east is the Atlantean Ocean, while the territories of Mana and Birama are on the northern borders. An arm of the Acuan Gulf lies to the northwest, while the southwest border is with untamed Aigua. All the natives of this region are brown-skinned and somewhat short in stature.

Taracua is the most civilized region of eastern Tamoanchan, inhabited by a metalworking, city-based culture which is amicable to outsiders and engages in regular trade with the outside world. Though other civilizations to the west and north have developed Atlantean-influenced cultures with superior power or sheer architectural or physical scope, Taracua has undeniably preserved the best of ideals and philosophies of the Atlanteans and the Hesperians, creating a hybrid society of great power and vigor.

Three cities are present on the Atlantean coast of Taracua, and nearly all the population of the region lives in these three major settled areas. The largest is the capital, Vaca (WA-ka); the other two are Buranhaem (BUR-an-hem) and Iberahem (IB-er-a-hem). Merchants from Atlantis, and even from Tartessos and other eastern ports, visit Taracua's cities from time to time. In turn, on very rare occasions, the

Taracuans sail eastward in search of trade or on pilgrimages, quests, and so forth.

There is a single small port and mining village on the Acuan gulf coast called Sarahem. Sporadic trade with Quechua is centered here, but there are no real facilities for foreigners with large ships.

A whole range of magical disciplines are studied by the Taracuans, but the most important field is Astrology (Necromancy, on the other hand, is least common). Alchemists, Sages and Sorcerers are all few in numbers but well respected, nonetheless.

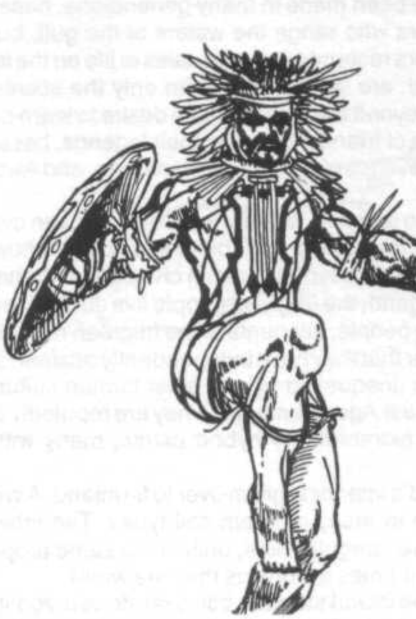
Taracua is blessed with a plentiful supply of foodstuffs. Crops include manioc, sweet potatoes, yams, pumpkins, calapashes, coffee, cocoa, tobacco, and legumes.

Tapir, peccary, monkeys, birds, turtles and other animals are found here in abundance. Fishing is also important to the Taracuan people.

Both the male and the female serve in the Taracuan military. A standing army is charged with the defense of the borders. In the north, they face the raids of Birama's demon-worshipping cannibals, who seek to kidnap women and children for ritual feasts and demon sacrifices, and to kill men for food. The western border with Mana must also be protected against the depredations of the animal-men of that region. These, being rather disorganized, offer less of a threat than the Hoacans of Birama. Warriors also are assigned to protect the cities, the farms, and the ships of Taracua. A part-time militia made up of hunters forms a last line of defense against any enemy who threatens the coast lands.

Taracua is ruled by a king and queen who are only occasionally bound by ties of marriage. The two monarchs are selected in a democratic fashion, with the Queen chosen by a vote of the women, and the king by a vote of the men. These elections install the new monarch(s) on the throne for life, or until voluntary or forced abdication. Only when a position becomes vacant is a new monarch selected; thus, it is hardly ever necessary to select two new rulers at the same time.

The king and queen have equal power, but they do not rule as absolute monarchs. Two other power blocks share power with them, a Council of Sages (made up of the country's most esteemed astrologers) and a Council of Landowners (plantation owners, military officers, and merchants and other wealthy people). In all matters of national policy, the two councils cast one vote apiece upon reaching a concensus among their own ranks. The monarchs each have two votes. To pass a law or other measure, four of the six votes must favor it.



Taracuans love color and artistry. Buildings and large stones are covered by brightly colored murals, ranging from surrealistic, geometric shapes to realistic depictions of animals or scenes. Another major outlet for art is in the field of body painting. Clothing in this hot, wet land is always minimal (usually little more than loin cloths are worn), so people paint their bodies extensively. Tattooing is not commonly practiced, for the Taracuans prefer to change the designs they wear as often as foreigners change their clothing. The amount and frequency of body paint worn is a good indication of social class, for only the very rich can afford the time every day to indulge in extensive body decoration. Another facet of Taracuan personal appearance is that both sexes wear long hair, often braided.

The Taracuans take pride in all that they do, and try to elevate everything they undertake into an art form. They are fine sculptors, and have developed useful pottery sculpture into a distinctive form of art. Their pots are both intrinsically useful in everyday life and also pleasing to the eye, and are valued by foreign merchants (bringing 10x the standard rates for such items in places like Tartessos, Atlantis, and Qaddan). The same is true of jewelry, for the Taracuans design and make excellent works of the jeweller's craft from the gold and copper mined around Iberhem, supplemented by seashells and pearls. It is not unusual for anyone, male or female alike, to collect and wear such jewelry. There are no social preferences regarding the types of jewelry worn, but they are usually displayed to complement a bodypaint design.

Metal is also used for weapons. Meager sources of tin are hoarded, and used to make various bronze implements. Iron, and even occasionally Atlantean steel, are imported to make weapons and armor for the leaders of the Taracuan military.

Bows are the chief weapon of the army, with war clubs and hand axes used in close combat. Armor is minimal, but forearm guards and target shields are sometimes used. The lack of weapons superior to ordinary bronze items is not the result of ignorance; a Taracuan could forge Atlantean steel, but the essential resources are not available for such undertakings, and thus must be imported from overseas. Taracuan shipbuilding is also good, being largely based on the sleek design of Hesperian warships. The construction and seamanship techniques of the Taracuans are best suited to coastal and river waters. They can face an oceanic voyage, but are less efficient than the ships and sailors of nations more accustomed to such long, hazardous journeys.

ULLOA (oo-LO-a)

The inhospitable and mysterious land of Ulloa is part of the South District of Tamoanchan, a long, narrow peninsula jutting southwards between the Atlantean Ocean and the great Stygian Sea. To the north, Ulloa borders on Paragua, with a tiny portion touching the bounds of Nazca. For the most part it is harsh, and barren, but the northern areas do include tracts of lush jungle. Also in the north, in the high mountains bordering Nazca and Paragua, are valuable deposits of copper. Otherwise the land is uninteresting, and virtually uninhabited.

It was not always so. According to ancient Atlantean texts, the central and northern regions were once home to a thriving civilization, with many mountain cities on the same pattern as is common among the inland cities of Quechua today. But the Ulloans went through a prolonged period of religious civil wars, in which a number of new, often perverted cults arose. They battled one another ruthlessly, and the region was thoroughly fragmented when disaster came.

The Atlanteans, at the height of their power and achievement, invaded Ulloa in hopes of securing its rich copper mines. Splintered, the Ulloans were unable to offer effective resistance and city after city fell. The siege of the final city, the capital of Yamquisapa (YAM-kwi-ZAP-a), is a subject of mystery and myth in both Tamoanchan and Atlantean sources. It is said that the High Shamaness of the city, a follower of one of the most degenerate and evil cults the Ulloans created, sought to invoke the power of the Old Gods against the Atlanteans, and so staged an elaborate ritual which call upon dark evil powers. At the climax of the rite, the Old Gods did intervene; they transformed the Shamaness into solid granite. The ceremony was not completed, but it is said that the fabric of existence was weakened around Yamquisapa, so that fell creatures could sometimes find their way into the world there. So daunted were the Atlanteans by these events that, though they accepted the surrender of the terrified inhabitants, they never entered the city to plunder or occupy it. The populace, too, refused to remain. The ruins lie there yet, most feared of all the abandoned, dangerous lost cities of Ulloa.

Even the story of Yamquisapa, however, is far less a mystery than the enigma surrounding the disappearance of Ulloa's entire native population a few years later. In the wake of the Atlantean conquest, the population chose not to serve as slave labor for their new masters, and so followed a Shaman leader who prophesized salvation for the people atop lofty Mt. Achane (ah-Ka-nee). Groups slipped away into the wilderness and made their way here, ascending to the summit. Here, at the mysterious Gold Door, legends say they found a passage that led to a strange, fabulous subterranean world. They entered, and have remained hidden and aloof from the surface world for thousands of years since. Today, no-one knows their fate. Some scholars believe that all the stories of the Ulloans are no more than a colorful myth. Every so often, though, adventurers who claim to have stumbled across the Gold Door and its secrets bring their story back to the unbelieving ears of the surface world.

Soon after the Ulloans vanished, the fearful Atlanteans themselves departed. They carried off plunder, and a few shipments of copper from the rich veins of the north, and departed for more hospitable climes. Since then, Ulloa has been a land of peril, where only a few backward tribes dare to tread. Monsters and nearly-extinct dinosaurs are said to have found refuge in the land, but mostly Ulloa is bleak, barren, and eerie, haunted by memories of terror and mystery.

ISLE OF TAMAWA (ta-MA-wa)

This lonely island is best known for the Elysium Palisades, a huge cliff of solid serpentine along the west coast. Atlantean explorers discovered it during the Atlantean Golden Age, but before it could be exploited, the collapse of their empire forced the abandonment of their attempts to develop the region. Problems in Huac, to the south, also contributed to their decline. Knowledge of the island has faded, buried in obscure books found only in a few private libraries.

Tamawa is mostly desolate and unattractive. Droughts are common in the land, often followed by violent wind-spread brushfires set off by lightning storms. Following the drought season comes a period of heavy rainfall, bringing flash floods and mudslides. A brief spring season brings forth flowers and pleasant weather, but this period of quiet is quickly displaced as the droughts begin once more.

There are numerous forms of animal life in Tamawa — bear, deer, rabbit, puma, coyote, snake, vulture and armadillo are the most common, along with less frequent forms such as scorpions, raccoons, skunks, hawks, goats, iguanas, and peccaries. No intelligent beings or peoples are believed to inhabit the island, though much may have changed since the days of the Atlanteans.

THE OCARABA CHANNEL (O-ca-RA-ba)

The deep water of the Ocaraba Channel connects the Tamarack Sound to the confluence of the Atlantean Ocean and the Antillan Channel, and separates Eria from Tamoanchan. Associated bodies of water include the Gulf of Tamara (ta-MA-ra), Tacuba (ta-CU-ba) Gulf, Tamagostad (ta-ma-GOS-tad) Gulf, and the Maka Lagoon. The latter was believed to have been a river at one time, but an earthquake is said to have sunk the land around the river and widened the mouth where it flowed into the Ocaraba Channel. Freshwater springs and runoff from the mountains and swamps of Aricagua and Awok mingle with the salt water of the channel to form the largest lagoon on Earth. The Makara like these waters; fresh water is a strong narcotic both to them and to their shark steeds, and the low salinity of the lagoon is stimulating.

The Makara, indeed, are common through most of the channel. Their presence inhibits the people of Tamarack from plying these waters, and limits trade of any kind from passing through these waters. The Ocaraba Channel is exceptionally clear and warm. Many species of eel, tropical fish, and seaweed are abundant throughout the region, as are numerous varieties of shellfish right along the continental coasts (particularly in the Gulf of Tamara). The only islands in these waters are insignificant rocks, most of them close inshore in the gulfs extending off the channel proper.

THE GULF OF ACUA (a-KU-a)

The semicircular curve of the Gulf of Acua splits the eastern portion of Tamoanchan in half. A warm, tropical body of water, it empties into the Atlantean Ocean between Birama and Awok. The seadevils of the ocean depths ply these waters, making them extremely dangerous for human travelers and limiting sea trade to a few coasting vessels at the extreme western portions of the bay.

One major chain of small islands exists between Awok, Oguanabara, Birama, and Mana, in the wide flaring between the entrance to the gulf and the Mana Sound. These islands, the Isles of Tirakamba, are mostly uninhabited, with one notable exception.

THE ISLES OF TIRAKAMBA

(tir-a-KOM-ba)

These dozens of small islets are mostly inhabited by wild beasts and dangerous monsters. One, however, the island of Inigre (e-NEE-gra), is home to an isolated human culture. It is the largest of the Isles, about two miles long by half a mile wide. Megalithic walls of precision-hewn stone — built in ancient times by some unknown but very advanced culture — augment the island's natural stone cliffs to present a continuous barrier against the outside world. There is not a single entranceway or break of any kind in this great barrier, called: *The Wall of the World* by native Inigreans.

Explorers have "discovered" Inigre repeatedly over the ages, but none have penetrated the outer wall. What little we know of Inigre comes from traditions handed down in Taracua. The Taracuans claim to have received visits from Inigrean seafarers centuries ago. No such voyages have been made in many generations, because of the threat of the Makara who range the waters of the gulf, but in those ancient days, visitors recounted strange tales of life on the island. The Inigreans, it is said, are isolationists, with only the scantest knowledge of the world beyond the Wall and little desire to learn more. They have no knowledge of friendly peoples; their legends, based on early contacts with the savages of Birama, Oguanabora, and Awok are now much distorted.

The travelers who reached Taracua were exiles driven over the wall of the World for crimes against their people, who somehow survived the dangers of the world beyond to reach civilization. Within the wall, according to the legend, the Inigrean people live out their entire lives. Primarily a farming people, accounts of the Inigrean methods of agriculture make it clear that they have independently attained an agricultural sophistication unequalled by any other human culture, past or present, even the First Age Atlanteans. They are reputedly capable of creating the most extraordinary hybrid plants, many with magical properties.

Most of the island's interior is given over to farmland. A wide variety of crops are grown in many different soil types. The inhabitants of Inigre live in small rectangular huts, built in the same proportions as the island itself (four times as long as they are wide).

In the center of the island stands a colossal stone megalith of workmanship equalling that of The Wall's. The Inigreans know nothing of its origins. People visit it only on certain holy days, placing great garlands of flowers at the base of the monolith and then swiftly departing. The significance of the ceremony is unknown; the Inigreans who told of it refused to discuss the details of the ritual with strangers.

They are also familiar with techniques of mining and metalworking.

Gold, copper, and precious stones are apparently common on Inigre, and together with stone and clay are commonly used to make implements of all kinds. They make neither weapons nor armor of any sort.

When faced with danger, they are said to flee and hide in their homes, dropping any possessions or items they may be holding in their frantic haste. Despite this evident cowardice, however, there are no accounts of anyone — human, Makara, or other — ever having conquered these people. As for the other isles of the chain, they are inhabited primarily by serpents and other species of reptile. Occasionally shipwrecked sailors or native exiles have lived on these other islands, but mostly they remain unexplored and unvisited.

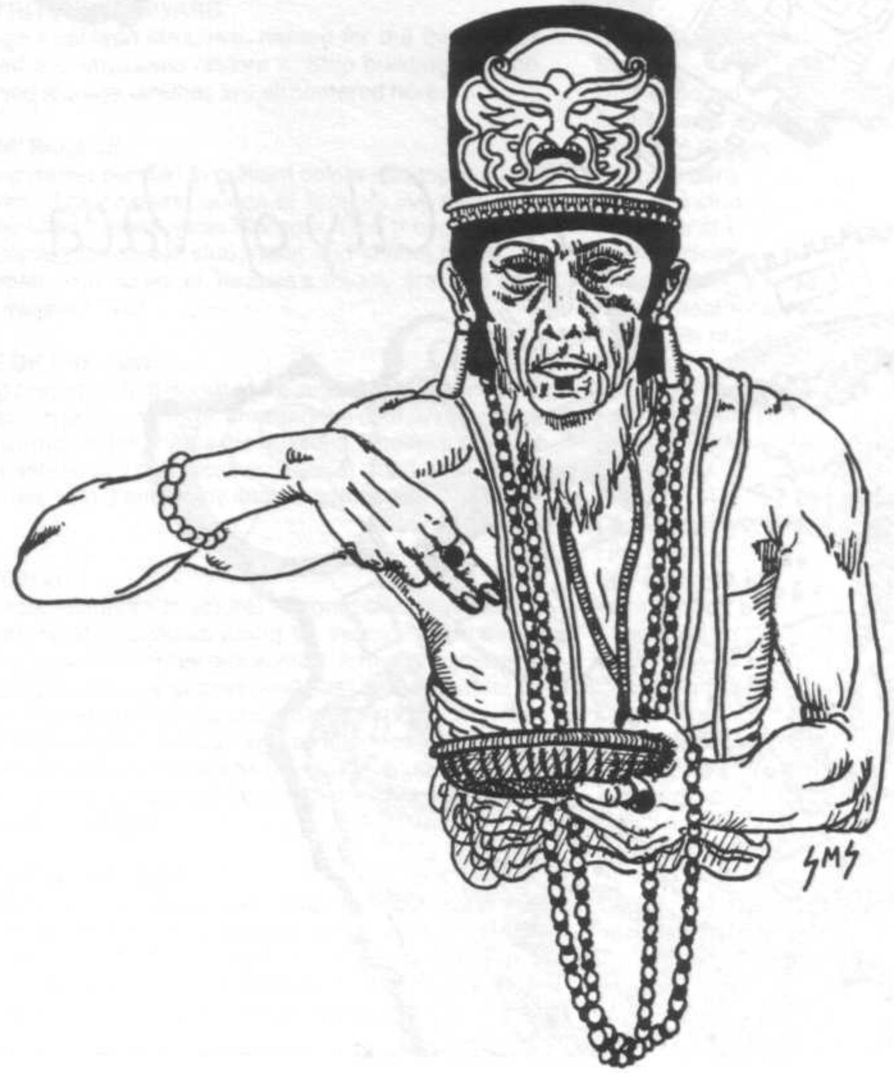
THE CITY OF VACA (WA-ka)

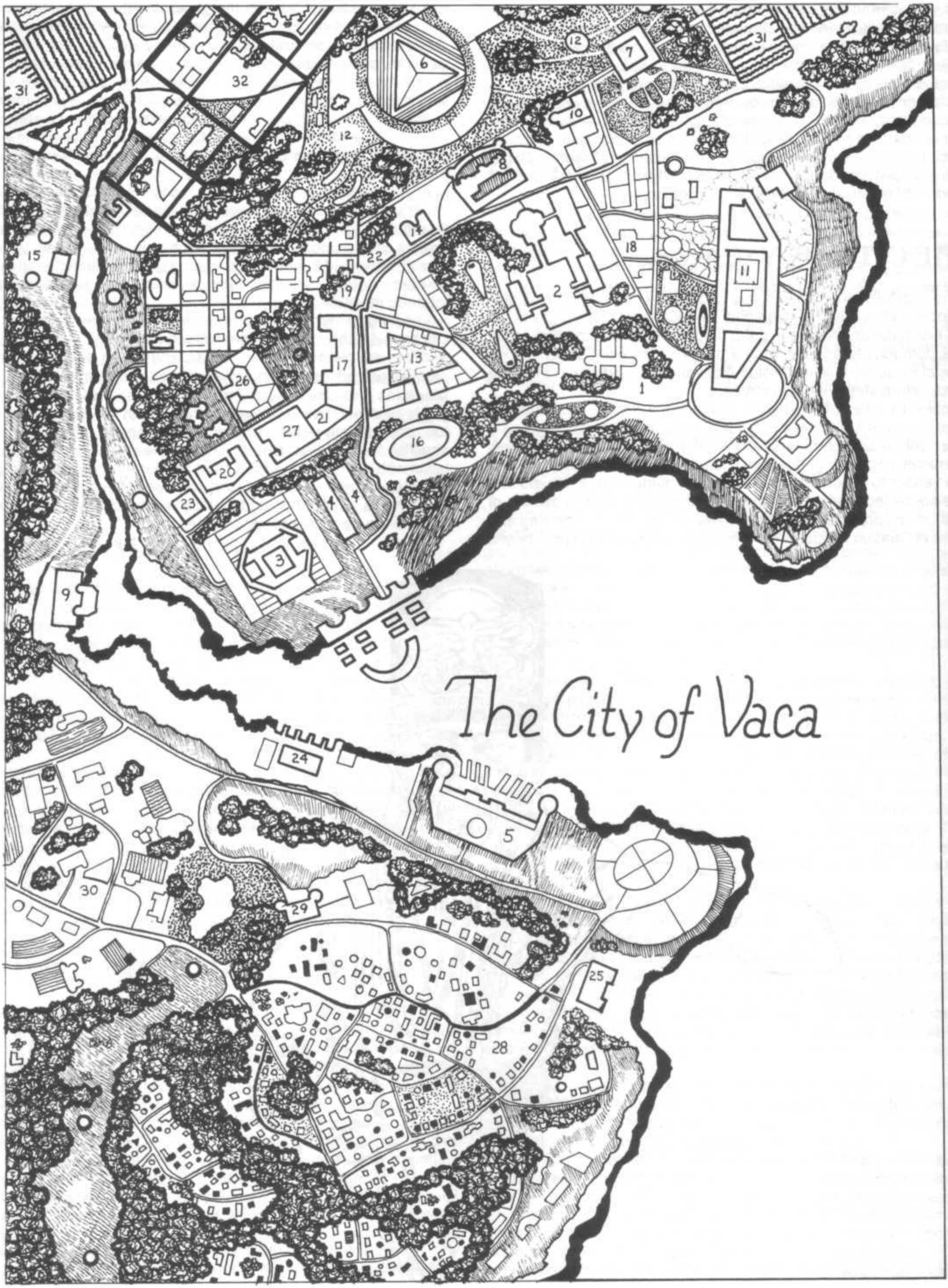
The coastal capitol of Taracua is Vaca, a city built upon the ruins of an ancient First Age Atlantean port. Though most of the city's buildings are made of adobe and palm thatch, the most important structures (temples, fortresses, etc.) are built of massive stone blocks. Many of these are built in the old Atlantean style, and some in fact are merely refurbished First Age structures.

Unlike the cities of most other advanced societies, Vaca has few shops and small business establishments. Instead, the city has a large public marketplace where hundreds of vendors sell their wares. As a result, prices for goods may fluctuate greatly from day to day, or from vendor to vendor. In order to keep arguments to a minimum, a state-appointed "judge" (always seated under a special awning of woven mats) presides over the marketplace each day. The king and queen of Taracua reside within the city, as do many high priests and astrologers associated with the government. A fairly large military contingent, led by Taracua's seven female warchieftains, is also present, as are several divisions of city guards. The city is well patroled, and criminals and troublemakers are treated harshly. The punishment for theft is slavery, the perpetrator's face being marked with identifying tattoo/scars. A second offense usually means death. Homicide, regardless of intent or circumstance, is punishable by execution, as is adultery. In all cases, the accused is allowed but a single chance to argue his or her case, after which swift judgement is passed.

All things considered, life in Vaca is good. The majority of the population support themselves by growing maize, the staple of most Taracuans' diet. To increase productivity, farmers often work in communal groups of 20 or more individuals, each helping the others to accomplish their work. All commoners must pay a "maize tax" equivalent to 25 percent of their season's crop, or donate time to perform manual labor for the state.

The jungles immediately surrounding the western perimeter of the city have, for the most part, been cleared of dangerous beasts. Deer and fowl are plentiful in these areas, and are captured (usually with snares) for food. Parrots and other colorful birds are taken alive, using blowguns and clay pellets. Their colorful feathers are used extensively for decoration, and are sold throughout the region. Antillan Tritons occasionally visit the waters off Vaca, and trade conch and other shellfish for obsidian, flint, and jade. The people of Vaca do some trade with both Atlantis and Tartessos. In return for gold, honey, and precious stones, the Taracuans receive copper, bronze and iron implements. As Atlantis and Tartessos are both rivals for Taracuan trade, price wars are not uncommon.

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The City of Vaca

1. THE SEABREEZE GARDENS

A flowery park overlooking the bay of Uba. It has several stone statues of Taracuan heroes and heroines of past ages. Courtesans frequent the park at night, each competing for the attentions of pedestrians by the vividness of their body paint. Thieves also come here, skulking in the gardens in wait of unwary passersby.

2. THE UNIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE

An ancient Atlantean structure, restored by the Taracuans. A library and university complex are found here, both facilities being available to Taracuan civilians free of charge (foreigners may enroll in any course for a fee of 70 G.P., or may use the library for 7 S.P. per day). The most popular courses are: *Taracuan Art, Military Tactics, Aquatic (language of the Tritons), Herblore, Astrology, and Stone Carving.* The library is considered of average quality.

3. FORTRESS OF THE SEVEN AMAZONS

This massive stone structure serves as the main base of operations for Taracua's military forces, which are modeled after the Hesperian army. Twenty divisions of archers and half as many heavy infantry (javelin, short sword, leather armor, helm, and shield) are stationed here at all times, along with Taracua's seven female commanders.

4. BARRACKS

Each of these long, wooden structures houses a division of archers, heavy infantry, or city guards (obsidian club and shield). An adjacent facility serves as an armory and supply shed.

5. THE THREE TRITONS SHIPYARD

A former First Age Atlantean structure, named for the three Triton chiefs who helped the Taracuans restore it. Ship building, maintenance, docking and storage facilities are all centered here.

6. THE RAINBOW PALACE

A truncated step-pyramid painted in brilliant colors and topped by a great, crystal prism. The king and queen of Taracua live here, surrounded by servants and astrological advisors. One thousand elite guards (leather armor, spear, war club, helm and shield) guard the grounds at all times. The riches of Taracua's royalty are also kept here, in a secret treasure vault.

7. THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN

A towering step-pyramid built in honor of Taracua's patron sun deity. Several dozen astrologers dwell here, charting the course of the sun, moon, and stars as they move across the heavens. The high priest of Taracua (also an astrologer) sacrifices a virgin at each new moon. Records of Taracuan history and many ancient scrolls and tablets are also kept here.

8. THE COUNCIL HALL

A massive First Age Atlantean structure, restored and redecorated with Taracuan bas relief sculptures along its exterior and interior walls. Here the king, queen and their advisors sit, formulating government policy, hearing civilian complaints, and passing judgement on criminal offenders. A division of elite guards stands watch from within and without. The high priest of Taracua acts as intermediary with the king, and grants or refuses audiences as he sees fit. In times of war, Taracua's military commanders meet here with the king, the queen, and their most trusted advisors.

9. THE EMPORIUM OF NATIONS

Center for all trade transactions between Taracua and other lands. Twenty scribes notate all incoming and outgoing cargo vouchers, while minor officials inspect the contents of foreign vessels (upon arrival and prior to departure). A one percent duty is levied on all imported goods, but otherwise there are no restrictions governing trade.

10. ROYAL METAL WORKERS

A smith and foundry facility which manufactures most arms and metal utensils for the Taracuan military and government. The city's finest silver and goldsmiths also work here, producing ornamental wares of exceptional quality and beauty and minting all Taracuan coinage.

11. THE CITADEL OF VACA

This stone edifice serves as the primary base of operations for Taracua's elite guards (jaguar-hide head dresses and armor, obsidian clubs and daggers, and shields), the total number of which is kept secret. The infamous dungeons of Vaca are found in the lower levels of the citadel.

12. THE FOUNTAINS

A spacious park facility featuring tiered gardens and numerous, decorative fountains. The facility is open to the public, and is heavily patrolled by city guards during the evening hours. Astrologers from the Temple of the Sun and scholars from the university often stroll the grounds.

13. THE PUBLIC MARKET

Considered the largest and most colorful marketplace in the known world. Hundreds of vendors come here daily, offering wares from Taracua and (to a lesser extent) other regions of Tamoanchan. Some of the most popular items and their average costs are listed below:

ITEM	COST
Copal (incense; stick)	1 S.P.
Slave	100 G.P.
Cotton (sq. yd.)	5 S.P.
Courtesan's favors	10 G.P.
Obsidian dagger	1 G.P.
Stingray barb	1 G.P.
Obsidian club	2 G.P.
Jade (per ct.)	4 S.P.
Feather cloak	10 G.P.
Emerald (per ct.)	20 G.P.
Feather/leather armor	12 G.P.
Topaz (per ct.)	6 G.P.
Blow gun	1 C.P.
Dried fish (lb.)	2 C.P.
Parrot feathers (12)	1 G.P.
Deer meat (lb.)	1 S.P.
Wax (lb.)	5 G.P.
Salt (lb.)	2 G.P.
Cochineal (dye; lb.)	20 G.P.
Flint knife	5 S.P.
Sea shells (lb.)	1 C.P.
Turtle egg	1 C.P.
Stone beads (12)	3 C.P.
Melon	2 C.P.
Conch (trumpet)	2 C.P.
Cocoa (cup)	1 S.P.
Gourd rattle	5 C.P.
Honey (lb.)	1 G.P.
Tortoise shell drum	2 S.P.
Maize (lb.)	1 C.P.
Bone flute	1 S.P.
Rabbit	5 C.P.
Copper ankle bells	5 S.P.
Rush mat (sq. yd.)	5 C.P.
Quetzal feathers (12)	2 G.P.
Clay pot	2 S.P.
Song bird	10 + G.P.
Basket	1-4 C.P.

14. MESSENGER QUARTERS

In this building are housed the royal messengers, swift runners who serve the king, queen and their advisors. Working in teams of three, they travel Taracua's dirt roads, bringing royal edicts and proclamations to other Taracuan cities and villages.

15. GRANARY/FOOD STORAGE

A state-run facility which collects and stores the maize tax (25 percent of harvest) which all farmers in the region must pay.

16. THE ARENA

A walled stadium where a number of sporting events (such as wrestling, foot races, and team ball games) are held for the benefit of the general public. Admission is free for Taracuans, and 1 S.P. for foreigners. Seating is by social class and standing. Betting is a popular pastime amongst the wealthier citizenry.

17. THE ANACONDA HOUSE

This inn and tavern specializes in Taracuan cuisine, including sweet potatoes, melons, tapioca, corn cakes, and anaconda. Rum, coffee, and cocoa are the most popular types of drink served here. Service is excellent, and musicians, jugglers and dancers provide entertainment on most nights. Prices are about average. The place is frequented mostly by native Taracuans, though merchants and travelers sometimes come here.

18. THE SEADEVIL

An inn and tavern catering to sailors and other sea-faring types. Trophies (including a stuffed Makara seadevil and several huge shark jaws) line the walls, along with fishing nets, shells, and artifacts dredged from the ocean depths. Many types of seafood are served here, along with healthy mugs of spiced wine and fruit liquors. Quality is good to average, and prices are about 10 percent above standard rates.

19. THE HOUSE OF COLOR

This establishment is run by a family of body painters renowned for their artistic abilities. Every hue and shade can be reproduced, in a wide variety of standardized styles. Cost is 2 S.P., or 2 G.P. for custom designs.

20. HOUSE OF THE JAGUAR

A tavern frequented primarily by members of the Taracuan military. Non-military patrons are often regarded with some suspicion by the regular clientele, which can become rowdy as the evening wears on. Quality and prices are about average.

21. POTTER

A maker of ceramic bowls, statuary and beads. Prices are average, and quality is good.

22. CURIOS

A shop dealing in odd relics and articles obtained from traders and adventurers (most are from other parts of Tamoanchan). It is rumored that the proprietor secretly deals in such forbidden goods as Abara shrunken heads and necromantic fetishes. Most items fall within the 5-100 G.P. range, with more or less expensive articles being found on occasion.

23. COSTUMER

This shop specializes in articles made of feathers and hides, such as ornate cloaks, head dresses, and boots. Special items designed exclusively for religious festivals are also available, as are Taracuan style feather and hide armor and shields. Prices are average, and quality is very good. Custom work may be arranged at two times standard rates.

24. SEA DRAGON SHIPYARD

Vaca's lesser port facility, catering mainly to small craft and fishing vessels. Facilities for maintenance and repair can be found here, as well as storage sheds, drying racks (for nets), and a supply store. Little construction is done on the premises due to the generally low quality of the facilities.

25. HOUSE OF THE MOON

A disreputable tavern and inn frequented by courtesans, sailors, travelers, and a variety of scoundrels. The city guards generally leave this establishment alone, on the theory that is is preferable to allow troublesome individuals to congregate in a single, isolated spot. Prices are low (one-half standard rates), as is the quality of service.

26. FISH MARKET

An outdoor marketplace where fishermen hawk their wares. Conch and other shellfish acquired from Triton traders are also sold here, along with less common species of marine animals. Prices range from a few copper pieces (for most types of fish) to 10 G.P. or more (for rarer species and certain delicacies).

27. STONE CUTTERS

Makers of all sorts of stone statuary, flags, and blocks. Costs are average, and quality is very good.

28. FOREIGN QUARTER

This poorly-maintained sector is crowded with the huts of numerous families of immigrants and refugees, most from Quechua, Equa, or Nazca. Poverty, malnutrition, and criminal activity are widespread in this section of the city, which is avoided by most Taracuans.

29. GUARD STATION

A barracks complex normally occupied by a division or more of city guards. Those stationed here have been assigned the unenviable task of keeping the foreign quarter under control. Because there is so much trouble in this sector, patrols numbering ten or more men are not uncommon.

30. COMMONERS' QUARTER

Most of Vaca's common laborers, fishermen, and craftsmen live here. Their huts are clean and well-kept, most having small vegetable gardens located off to one side. Unlike the foreign quarter, there is enough land for the people to live in relative comfort.

31. FARMLAND

Here are found the majority of Vaca's farmers and produce growers, most of whom live on one to four acre plots of land. By law, half of what is grown must be given to the state, and half is the farmer's, to do with as he pleases. The farmers of this region must work constantly to keep the fast-growing jungle from impinging upon their fields and orchards.

32. UPPER CLASS RESIDENCES

Far removed from the common folk, the upper classes dwell in this pleasantly landscaped sector. City guards regularly patrol the paved roads of this section of Vaca, and most of the wealthier Vacans keep slaves as personal bodyguards.

THE NETHER REALMS

Far to the south, some say at the edge of the world, lies the mysterious region known as The Nether Realms. Bordered to the northwest by the Stygian Sea, and to the northeast by the Forgotten Sea, The Nether Realms are shunned by sailors throughout the known world.

Tales of this strange land abound, both in legend and in primitive folk lore. The natives of southern Tamoanchan call this place *The Land of the Dead*. Here, they say, the spirits of evil men and women are doomed to wander forever as punishment for their earthly sins. The area is described by these natives as being burning hot by day, and freezing cold by night. The air is said to be choked with clouds of red dust, which, carried upon the wind, hover over the land like crimson spectres.

Equally unpleasant is the Elysium Islanders' legend, which depicts the region as the place from which all dragons originate. According to the Kiowans, the dragons are "born of fire, and emerge from the depths of volcanoes bearing with them riches from beneath the earth's surface." A related folk tale tells of a greedy Kiowan warrior who traveled to the forbidden land to steal the treasures of the three-headed dragon, Azhdak. Hoping to sneak up on the dragon while it dozed, the warrior discovered to his dismay that only two of Azhdak's heads ever sleep at any given time; Azhdak's third head subsequently brings the story to an end in swift fashion.

Many more such tales exist, all perhaps of questionable value to the experienced seaman or navigator. Of more practical consideration may be the voluminous tome entitled: **THE LOG OF THE MARINER** (author unknown), reputedly discovered long ago in the hold of a half-sunken Sheban trading vessel. Though rife with gross overstatements and absurd postulations, the book is uncannily precise in certain aspects, and so is presented here in excerpted form:

"Thousands of miles had we traveled, through hazards beyond mortal endurance, when at last we approached within sight of our fearful goal: the terrible place known as The Nether Realm. From our distant vantage point we could make out what appeared to be the bluish outlines of a vast and mountainous region, stretching east and west as far as the eye could see.

"Ignoring the superstitious lamentations of our crew, I bade the helmsman to approach. As we did so the landscape ahead of us began more and more to resemble the icy peaks of Jotunheim, of which I have written elsewhere in this work. The air, however, was uncannily warm, and seemed in conflict with the landscape which lay ahead of us.

"Approaching to within a mile or so of the shore, we detected the presence of what appeared to be a series of inlets or channels, leading inland. The closer we came, the more numerous did these waterways appear to be. On my command, the helmsman made for one of the wider channels, which measured perhaps twelve hundred feet across. This action brought forth the most profound wailing from the crew, who began at once to invoke the name of every beneficent deity known to man.

"Even so, we continued on. Entering the channel, those few of us who had not prostrated ourselves upon the deck now marvelled at the moutains of ice which loomed ominously to either side of our vessel. Through the twisting inlet we sailed, until, of a sudden, we came upon an intersection of sorts. Here three other rivulets converged upon the main channel at odd angles. Choosing the passage most consistent with our previous course, we proceeded further ahead. In short time we came upon another intersection, followed in succession by other adjoining waterways.

"Upon meeting with this selfsame occurrence at every turn, the true configuration of the land began to become apparent. Rather than being a solid mass, the region instead seems to consist of numerous islands of ice, connected by a labyrinthine network of natural canals. The size of these "islands" varies considerably, though the smallest might well be compared to a medium-sized mountain.

"As for the flora and fauna, to be frank, I have seen nothing to indicate that the region supports either plant or animal life of any sort. Certain suggestive incidents — strange sounds being borne on the winds, mysterious ripples breaking the surface of the water, and so on — have been reported by members of the crew, but further investigation seems out of the question, at least for the moment. My suggestion that we put ashore and explore one of the icy "islands" was met with a mutinous verbal assault upon my person, of such intensity that I had to seek refuge in my cabin. Were it not a certainty that the men admire and respect me, I might have cause to fear some physical harm as well."

STYGIAN SEA (STIJ-ee-an)

These dreaded waters are rarely sailed by men. The few sailors who have been foolhardy enough to explore the sea have returned — sometimes — with stories of fell creatures of unknown origins stalking ships like jungle cats stalking prey. Leviathans and kraken, huge beasts of incredible power, are supposed to dwell in the dark waters, and ordinary sea creatures — whales, squid, octopi, and sharks — are rumored to reach tremendous sizes in this region.

But the true danger of the sea is said to be a tribe of demon-worshipping Makara who live deep within the Stygian basin. Their shamans have brought scores of lesser demons to become permanent denizens of the evil waters. The giant great white sharks are supposed to serve the Makara, as well.

Earthquakes are said to wrack the ocean depths, perhaps caused by the closeness of the demonic planes, causing massive tidal waves to radiate outward from the heart of the Stygian Sea.

THE ISLE OF DREAD

Lying in the southern waters of the Stygian Sea is a large, irregularly shaped island, created around a chain of volcanoes which spew ash and lava out almost continuously. On the isle itself, ash accumulates in drifts up to twenty feet deep, and the waters around the island are murky grey with such volcanic debris.

Where the ash does not accumulate, lava lakes and rivers make travel next to impossible. Normal beings cannot survive long here without magical aid.

No sailor has willingly set foot on the Isle of Dread since the First Age, but the legendary horrors of the island are recounted with relish in many a tavern and waterfront inn even today. The island, it is said, was discovered by Atlanteans late in the First Age, when decadence and corruption were already widespread in the empire. Beneath the volcanic ash and among the steaming lava pools, the stories say, those first sailors found innumerable gems of incredible size and beauty. Among these was a type of stone which has never been found elsewhere, before or since, known as Black Diamond. The Isle of Dread is said to be the only source of these priceless stones, which are valued at ten times the worth of standard diamonds.

A legend dating back to the First Age states that a powerful wizard once came to this isle, hoping to make his fortune. The wizard, a secret practitioner of the necromantic arts, is said to have employed a workforce of undead creatures and minor demons to unearth the isles' treasures. According to the tale, the wizard's colossal greed was his undoing, and he perished in a volcanic eruption.

The same was not true of his inhuman servants, however, who (some say) still reside upon the Isle of Dread to this day.

THE NETHER ISLES

Aside from the Satyrides and Taenerus, next to nothing is known for certain about the islands and islets off the coast of the Nether Realm. Only three appear consistently on ancient maps of the region, most of which are considered of dubious origin.

Over the ages cartographers have given these isles all manner of names; most are obviously fanciful inventions. Among the more common names the Nether Isles are referred to in this modern age are: the Forgotten Isles, the Forsaken Isles, the Cold Isles, and, the Isles of World's End.

THE SATYRYDES (sa-TEER-id-eez)

Stories of the Satyrydes come down from very ancient Atlantean accounts, supplemented by a few more recent tales by far-ranging seafarers.

The Satyrydes are three in number, all very large islands. Two lie within the Forgotten Sea, called Panogwyll (pan-og-WIL) and Panogyr (pan-og-EER). The third, and largest, is Panogea (pan-og-EE-a), and lies near the mouth of the Ice Bay of Garmar (gar-MAR), a perpetually frozen indentation in the coast of the Nether Realm. A few tiny ice-covered rocky islets also dot the waters nearby, but they are not considered part of the Satyrydes.

Ancient seafarers tell of the hidden valleys of these three islands, shrouded in mist and heated by hot springs. Three are located on Panogea, two on Panogyr, and a single valley is said to nestle in the rugged mountains of Panogwyll. These valleys are filled with strangely luxuriant vegetation, almost tropical in nature, and a variety of fauna that would hardly be expected in such cold lands.

Small colonies of Satyrs and Gwyllion live in the valleys, the only intelligent dwellers said to reside on these islands.

In the winter, the sea freezes between all three of the Satyrydes and the coast of the Nether Realm. Every eleven years, bands of Satyrs and Gwyllion are said to make a sacred pilgrimage on foot to the Ice Cove of Panogwa (pan-OG-wa), on the shores of the Nether Realm. It is an arduous trek, and many die, but the strongest reach the Ice Cove despite the hardships of the journey. Once there, they erect an ice monolith of tremendous size within an equally large circle of solid ice; upon completion of this task, they hold an orgiastic fertility ritual lasting eleven days. Then they return once again, losing even more of their number on the return trip. They believe, say the old accounts, that this ritual ensures the strength and hardiness of the next generation.

In the summer, the ice melts, but icebergs and floes continue to clog the coastline and clutter the sea around the islands. It is a dangerous region, with the cold, stormy weather making travel difficult and the danger of drifting ice a constant hazard. Moreover, sea dragons are believed to roam the waters, especially near Panogwyll.

A comparatively recent account tells of a visit to the Ice Bay of Garmar by a Sheban vessel driven far across the sea by unrelenting storms. Somehow, the Shebans avoided the hazards of the waters and escaped alive, bringing back stories of a small fleet — four fat Atlantean merchant ships, of First Age design — frozen solid within the ice. Even crew members were supposed to be visible, still at their posts, staring through tons of ice at a horizon they have never reached through thousands of years. The Sheban story is particularly intriguing because the name of one of the Atlantean ships, Southwind Dayseeker, occurs in an old Atlantean legend of a ship lost before the Cataclysm while carrying a cargo of orichalc to a distant Atlantean colony.

TAENERUS (tay-en-AIR-us)

Once part of the Nether Realm, the island of Taenerus is said to have been separated from the mainland by earthquakes and rising waters that inundated a narrow, lowlying land bridge. The southern approaches to the island, according to legend, are very hazardous, thanks to this shallow water — the Taenerus Reef. It lies between the Nether Realm and the twin islands of Aconcagua and Gualagula, and so guards the passage between the Atlantean Ocean and the Stygian Sea.

There are numerous ancient legends about Taenerus, most of them patently absurd.

But it is always said to have been a source for rich deposits of precious gemstones, and Atlantean ships are known to have visited the forbidding, desolate island regularly in the First Age. It is also said that Atlantean sorcerers performed experiments seeking to produce plants and animals capable of thriving here, with mixed success. Strange monsters are supposed to haunt the rocky island even yet.

The neanderthaloids of Aconcagua and Gaulaguala regard Taenerus as a sacred place, where they believe dead heroes journey to live out their afterlives in perpetual triumph over the monsters there. The neanderthaloids are said to quaver at the thought of anyone visiting there, for fear that heroes and monsters alike will be set free to roam the lands of the living. Thus, they will do all in their power to stop strangers who seek to visit the sacred isle.

Taenerus is harsh, savage, and dangerous. The summer is dry and bleak, while winter is a time of terrible blizzards and frigid, subzero temperatures.

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